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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this forum was the assessment of how well current research is meeting the needs of rural educators. Individual papers presented at the forum are "Learning To Find the 'Niches': Rural Education and Vitalizing Rural Communities" by Daryl Hobbs with commentary by Richard Tulikangas; "Effective Rural Schools: Where Are We? Where Are We Going? How Do We Get There?" by Weldon Beckner with commentaries by Robert V. Carlson and Paul M. Nachtigal; "School Effectiveness: The Teachers' Perspective" by William A. Matthes with commentaries by Jack Sanders and James E. Akenson; "Research and Action Needs in Rural School Finance" by Robert E. Lamitie with commentaries by Austin D. Swanson, Stephen L. Jacobson, and David H. Monk; and "Staff Development Research and Rural Schools: A Critical Appraisal" by Fred Wood and Paul F. Kleine with commentaries by William A. Clauss and Kathleen R. Flanagan. Synthesizers' reports, summarizing the reactions, comments, and suggestions put forth at group sessions, include "A Synthesis of Comments and Recommendations on Rural Schools and Economic Development" by Kay Harned; "Directions and Possibilities for Rural Education Staff Development" by Edward Chance; "School Effectiveness from the Administration and Teacher Points of View" by Sterne Roufa, David Hagstrom, and Robert Warren; "Rural School's Finance Track" by Rose Ann Fogarty; and "Research: The Critical Audience Factor" by William LeTarte. (SV)

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National Rural Education Research Forum

Lake Placid, New York

October 16-17, 1987

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PREFACE

This Forum is the result of the many commitments to rural education. The cooperation of U.S.D.O.E. is an on-going part of the rural initiatives announced at the N.R.E.A. Conference in 1984. The New York School Board's Association has collaborated on the basis of mutual interest and geographic propinquity.

The N.R.E.A. Research Committee began the process of direct involvement in rural research activities in 1986. In February of that year, the committee surveyed 752 superintendents to find out what research is most needed by them. The survey confirmed what we knew as prevailing opinion, that the major concerns were -- are we doing a good job? How can we finance and provide quality education in schools with limited enrollments? And what are the strength and weaknesses of small and rural schools? The Research Committee met in October 1986 to define the next logical step on these issues. This Forum was agreed upon as the appropriate way to conduct this assessment. This document and the dialogue at the Forum should help us determine how well we have answered the research needs of rural educators.

I personally want to thank all of the paper presenters. They deserve kudos for their interest and dedication.

Special appreciation must also be paid to Jeff Bowen. His help has made this Forum possible.

Jane Arends and the North Central Educational Laboratory have coordinated the printing. She, and the lab, are thus responsible for the wide distribution of this document.

Thanks, also, to the N.R.E.A. Research Committee for their support and willingness to provide feedback to improve our work. We will have to decide whether this kind of Forum should be held annually and what the appropriate content should be if we decide to meet regularly.

This has been a no-budget event made possible because of the benevolent spirit of the contributors, track leaders, reactors, synthesizers and all of the involved agencies - N.C.R.E.L., N.Y.S.S.A., N.R.E.A., and my own university department. I doubt that an urban National Research Forum could have the same spirit of giving without recompence. It has been fun to -- rather than talk about -- do. Thanks to all.

Keigh Hubel, Chairman
N.R.E.A. Research Committee
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LEARNING TO FIND THE "NICHES"
RURAL EDUCATION AND VITALIZING RURAL COMMUNITIES

Daryl Hobbs
University of Missouri

Prepared for the National Rural Education Research Forum
Lake Placid, New York
October 16-17, 1987

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ABSTRACT

LEARNING TO FIND THE "NICHES":
RURAL EDUCATION AND VITALIZING RURAL COMMUNITIES

By

Daryl Hobbs, University of Missouri

Even more than the rest of the society, rural America has undergone substantial restructuring during the past two decades. This restructuring has dampened future prospects for the most widely practiced rural development strategy of the past - rural industrialization. Odds now favor "job creation" over "smokestack chasing" for many rural communities. But human capital is a key and educational innovations are a key to producing it.

We emphasize that rural restructuring has contributed to rural America having become more economically dependent and more economically and socially diverse. Concurrently rural regionalization has changed the role and function of rural communities. Regionalization and dependency have been reinforced by rural institutions having become more completely integrated into national "systems". These changed conditions affect both rural education and prospects for rural economic development.

After reviewing industrial restructuring of the society and economy we identify various factors and conditions that influence the prospects and opportunities for rural community economic development today. We emphasize that prospects for growth in natural resource and goods-producing industries (those that rural economies are most dependent on) are dim, but that service employment will likely continue to grow. New rural development strategies should take into account the job-creating potential of small business and entrepreneurship, especially in finding and filling local "niches". We also emphasize the need for more "knowledge-based" enterprise and the need to create new networks and partnerships to support alternative approaches to rural development.

We conclude by identifying some ways rural schools and rural education can more effectively support community economic development. Specifically we emphasize the need for providing sound basic education and training students to become more capable of innovation, entrepreneurship and working as members of small problem solving teams. We also emphasize the need for continuing education, more educational attention paid to the locality, and educational partnerships that can contribute to both improved education and improved prospects for community economic development.

The paper concludes with a review of some innovative approaches to linking rural education with rural revitationalization. A resource bibliography is attached.

Those rural communities who have survived the barrages of social and economic change of the past 80 years, continue to confront threats to their vitality and even existence as a new wave of national economic restructuring sweeps the land.

The threats to rural communities' survival during the first half of this century were largely attributable to the simultaneous industrialization of agriculture and the urban economy. The mechanization of agriculture released farm labor that booming urban industry was able to absorb. Substantial rural population (and economic) decline resulted as rural people moved to where the jobs were. Rural to urban migration, especially of youth, became as predictable as death and taxes. Industrialization of the economy, mechanization of agriculture and increased productivity of each went hand in hand. As farms changed so, of necessity, did agricultural communities. All the while rural and urban differences were becoming less distinct - rural America was becoming phased into an industrially based mass society.

Rural schools played a prominent role in this rural-urban inversion. Rural communities invested in the education of their youth who took their literacy and skills with them to cash in in urban labor markets. It is difficult to overstate the extent to which rural America subsidized the nation's economic growth through a continuing stream of literate and skilled workers imbued with a work ethic (Bowles and Gintis, 1974). Clearly the country was well served by this movement - the benefit to rural localities is much more difficult to assess. As human capital theorists were to later emphasize (e.g. Schultz, 1961; Mincer, 1979; Bowman, 1979) this tide of rural to urban human capital, if not the engine of national economic growth, was certainly a major source of it's fuel. This era spawned much of the conventional wisdom we continue to exercise today about the relationship between education and economic development: conventional wisdom that now tends to inhibit the innovation in both education and economic development that current circumstances necessitate. To paraphrase one author (Castle, 1986) our rural institutions have been remarkably faithful to the purposes they were created to serve, but the times have changed and so have the problems.

We will emphasize that our recent history has generated an economic development and an educational orthodoxy both of which appear to have outlived some of their usefulness. The value of those orthodoxies for rural economic development and rural education is particularly suspect because changed conditions make it increasingly improbable that rural industrialization will come to the rescue of rural economies. It is no more likely that rural communities will be able to continue to afford and justify all the features of the conventional, comprehensive school. Creativity and innovation is needed in both areas. Creative coupling at the community level of education and development in the service of rural revitalization may be one of the more fruitful innovations. To employ a term of currency, there is potential for substantial synergism by making that connection.

Because recent events have so shifted the landscape of economic development we will direct our attention initially to recent trends and how these are contributing to new economic development prescriptions and practices - both for rural communities and for the nation. From our perspective this alternative economic development agenda is opening the door widely for creative coupling of education and community economic development.

Creation of a New Rural Plateau

The problems created for rural communities by the long-term mechanization of agriculture and the exodus of trained manpower began to come clearly into focus by the late 1950's. At that time rural America was still predominantly agricultural but the consequences of uni-directional change had become obvious (Dillman, 1986). Media articles began to appear with regularity forecasting the "death" of rural communities. The first rural development legislation, uncoupled from agriculture, appeared during the Eisenhower administration and gained momentum through the range of "social" programs spawned during the War On Poverty (Hobbs, 1979). Concurrently the Interstate Highway system was begun. A round of rural restructuring was under way that would have a profound effect on everything rural - from schools, to employment and lifestyles.

With the stage thus set assimilation of rural America into the mass society accelerated from 1960-1980. For many reasons, including such major infrastructure investments as the Interstate system, greatly improved highways, many urban based goods-producing industries, in search of lower costs of production, especially labor, found communities with open arms in rural America. Rural communities had become anxious to fill the economic void created by a shrinking agricultural base. They not only laid out the welcome mat, but through their own industrial development efforts they added inducements and recruited industries wishing to expand or relocate. Thus a marriage was consummated. Industries, especially mature product, goods producing industries, largely dependent on relatively low skill labor, moved to the countryside. By the middle 1970's manufacturing employment had emerged as the single largest source of rural income (Pulver, 1986). From 1960 to 1975 growth in rural manufacturing employment exceeded that in metropolitan America by a substantial margin (Bradshaw, 1982). A new key to short-run survival and economic vitality of many rural communities had been found.

Concurrently other changes were contributing to further urbanizing rural America. Important among them was the rural population turnaround, which, during the 1970's, produced an unprecedented net movement of people from urban to rural areas (Wardwell, 1982). The reasons were multiple - more rural factory jobs was one; large numbers of retirees, free to have guaranteed retirement checks sent to whatever address they chose, began to choose rural addresses; yet another contributor was the many urban people who moved further from their city-based jobs to outlying rural communities in search of what they perceived to be the superior quality of life of the small town. Other factors such as the search for domestic energy and the national growth in demand for outdoor recreation also played a part. All added new components to the rural economic base. These factors diversified rural economies and motivated talk of a rural renaissance during the 1970's. But the "rural revival" proved to be short-lived as the agricultural crisis of the 1980's hit, some factories, having demonstrated their mobility by moving to rural areas, again became mobile in favor of off-shore locations (Bluestone and Harrison, 1982), and an energy crisis was transformed into an energy glut.

Thus by 1987, save for those rural communities fortunate enough to have "chosen" a location within commuting range of growing metropolitan areas, and those which continue to attract ex-urbanites in search of recreation or a country retirement, rural communities generally find themselves confronted with a shrinking economic base. A shrinking economic base translates into fewer jobs, an ability to support a smaller population, and declining revenue to support needed public services, including education. The decline has occurred simply because over the past 15 years, there has been virtually no employment growth in the nation's goods-producing industries (manufacturing, construction, mining, agriculture, forestry and fisheries) -the enterprises rural localities had become most dependent on (Garnick, 1985; Pulver, 1986). Consequently many rural communities today no longer see economic development as only desirable - it has become essential.

But the question has become: what kind of rural economic development is feasible, possible? Can rural communities expect to swim against the current of national and international economic trends? Hardly any of the traditional components of the rural economic base are prime candidates for notable growth. While rural localities did capture a larger share of manufacturing employment during the 1960's and 1970's, this proved to be at the back end of the curve since concurrently nearly all net national employment growth was being generated by the service sector (Bender, 1987). Nationally, industrial restructuring was and is occurring

(Tienda, 1986). Entrepreneurship (Drucker,1985), flex-system production (Reich, 1983), advanced services (Noyelle,1983), venture capital, small business development (Smith and Pulver, 1981), finding "niches", knowledge-based development (Deaton, 1986) etc. have begun to replace "smokestack chasing" in the lexicon of both national and rural economic development. Competitiveness has become the goal and new approaches are regarded as necessary to achieving it. But what tools does rural America have to work with in its quest for economic development? What is the "lay of the land"?

The Changed Contour of Rural America: A Different Social and Economic Landscape

The 1960's and 70's transformed rural America, but did not "solve" its perennial economic problems although many communities and regions experienced temporary relief. But the transformations did shift the playing field confronting rural communities in their quest for continued existence. We review some of the features of the changed landscape because there are indications that many administrators and policy makers continue to think of a rural America and a national economy that no longer exists (Castle, 1986). Chances for progress are likely to be improved if efforts are based on a rural America that is really "out there" rather than one that is presumed to exist, or remembered to have existed. Some features of the 1987 model of rural America include:

1. Rural community dependence - Most of the causes of rural community change originated from outside the community (Wilkinson, 1986).

Farm product, timber, energy and other natural resource prices are not established locally - they are determined by national and international markets; rural communities did not decide on their own to either move a factory to their community or to close it down (Summers, 1982). The forces of national and international change have caused rural communities to become more dependent - dependent for their economic existence on factors over which they have increasingly little control. Small rural economies have had few defenses against change - their increased external dependence has made them more vulnerable.

2. Rural diversity - Recent economic changes have not occurred uniformly across rural America. There has been uneven development. Rural industrialization was largely concentrated in the South and West (Rosenfeld, et.al. 1985; Bluestone and Harrison, 1982). Growth and decline in energy development took place mostly in the West and Southwest. As agriculture became more commercial, it also became more geographically concentrated. The farm crisis of the 1980's has been predominantly a crisis of the upper Midwest. Because of growth of other sources of rural income agriculture now ranks well down the list among rural income producers although many rural communities continue to be principally dependent on it. Retirement income now accounts for several times more rural income than agriculture (Bradshaw, 1982; Summers and Hirschl, 1985). Rural communities within 50 miles of major metropolitan areas are learning how to cope with growth while spatially isolated farming communities struggle to survive. Enclaves of urban affluence have sprung up in rural localities having outdoor recreation amenities. But rural America continues to harbor a disproportionate share of the

nation's poverty. Much of the rural poverty is concentrated in what have been labeled persistently poor counties - counties that have remained among the bottom 10 percent in income since 1950. These counties are largely populated by minorities - the Southeast having a major share (Daft, 1982).

Therefore talk about rural America in general is not very productive; local circumstances and opportunities vary too greatly. A strategy that makes sense for one rural community might well be a failure in another (Nachtigal, 1980).

3. Regionalization of rural communities and services - A persistent image, firmly embedded in nostalgia, portrays rural America as composed of relatively autonomous and self-sufficient communities having a high degree of social cohesion and identity. But, stimulated by improved highways and dominance of a "bigger is better" notion of efficiency, many communities have lost social and economic functions to larger towns. Instead of being "complete" communities, they have become partial communities at best. Application of the industrial themes of centralization, specialization and consolidation contributed to more rural services becoming concentrated in larger towns and small cities. Schools, health care, retail trade, vocational schools, government administrative services, etc. have become more centralized. Commuting to work in other communities has also become a widely practiced rural adaptation to shrinking local job prospects. Consequently today's rural resident typically patronizes a number of towns, spends a lot of time on the road, and participates in what might be termed "regional communities". Not only have many smaller communities lost economic and

service functions but they have correspondingly lost a part of the social attachment their residents feel toward the locality. The concept of rural community has changed substantially. (Summers, 1986; Wilkinson, 1986).

4. Incorporation of rural services into national "systems"- There is a national tradition of local/community control of services, especially education. But the general thrust of change has been to substantially reduce local autonomy and to incorporate more rural services, fiscally, administratively, and programmatically into state and national systems (Apple, 1982; Spring, 1982). Part of the impetus has been increased state and national funding, intended to "equalize" quality; another important contributor has been increased professionalization of services, especially education. A benefit to rural communities has been additional fiscal support for their services; costs include reduced adaptability of local services to the environment they serve and greater dependence (Castle, 1986). To a great extent this trend contributed to standardizing education - an effect which also reduces the potential for needed rural institutional innovation.

Since rural America, both economically and socially, has become more incorporated into the national "system", changes occurring nationally also have an important influence on rural localities. We turn now to some of the national changes which have rural implications.

The Current Economic and Social Environment

Although different authors have coined different terms to describe changes, there is a growing realization that megatrends are occurring and, like rural America, the entire national economy is undergoing transformation. Economic internationalization and a corresponding shift away from mass production of standardized goods to more of a service based economy are two of the more frequently cited features (Thurow, 1985).

Evidence of the restructuring is to be found all around us. Economic news presents a mixed bag. On the one hand it stresses that more jobs are being created, that the number of people employed stands at an all time high, that the economic recovery is continuing. But concurrently there are other trends that are prompting concern about national economic competitiveness. Gross national product continues to grow, but its rate of growth is slow. In most economic sectors labor productivity has stagnated and has fallen well behind other major industrial nations (Thurow, 1985). There is a contention that the U.S. has shifted from being a center of higher value production to lower value production (the growth of service employment is frequently cited as a reason). Reich (1983) for example, observes that while the U.S. is gaining automobile assembly plants with Japanese name plates, much of the higher value production of the sophisticated components is occurring in Japan. The lower value assembly of those components is taking place here. Growth of the service sector has meant that many of the new jobs being created are at or only slightly above minimum wage (Bluestone and Harrison, 1982). However services is a complex category since compensation (and skills) of service workers varies from the minimum wages of counter workers at fast food restaurants to the highest levels of compensation for say, neurosurgeons and corporate lawyers (Noyelle, 1983). Because of the surge of low wage employment, family income (in constant dollars) has declined over the past 15 years even though there has been a substantial increase in the number of multiple income families as women employed outside the home has become the norm.

National Transformations: From Mass Society to Multiple Option

Dillman (1986) has portrayed these transformations on the following chart. He shows three fundamentally different eras that have characterized the U.S. this century. The earliest of these - the era of community control (fundamental to many of our ideas about rural communities)- is pretty well past, while another - the one he refers to as an information age is in ascendance.

Dillman, is joined by others (e.g. Reich, 1983; Drucker, 1985; Thurow, 1985; Naisbitt, 1982) in noting that during the 1920's the mass society began to gain dominance, and a long term process began of incorporating local uniquenesses, interests, and needs under a national industrial and management-dominated umbrella. Local concerns and ways of doing things became subordinated to those of the larger society. Once in motion the twin principles of management and mass gained momentum and so transformed the society that by the 1960's the U.S. could be fairly characterized as a mass society. But analysts observe that the mass society is now losing its dominance, its place being taken by what Dillman calls an information age - an era likely to be dominated by information and information technology. While the mass society operated on the principle of centralization, information age technology creates a potential for decentralization. The standardization of everything that was a hallmark of the mass society is eroding as an operational principle. In its place a multiple option society is in the making - one in which it is no longer as clear as it once might have been who is employed and who isn't, who is a student and who isn't, who is married and who isn't, etc. (Naisbitt, 1982; Annison, 1982).

So the U.S. is now regarded as in a period of transition. But transitions are never as smooth as they appear to be when portrayed on a chart. Transitions can be confusing and new directions unclear. It is the transition from one set of operating rules (orthodoxy) to another that contributes to the mixed performance of the U.S. economy today. Change creates opportunities for additional change and it is the transformations underway that inspire repeated calls for innovation in the very institutions we have come to take most for granted. But as Icheiser has observed - nothing so persistently evades our attention as that which we take for granted.

Our Inheritance From the Mass Society - Dominance of Management

Robert Reich (1983) refers to the era of the mass society as the era of management. Peter Drucker (1986), himself a major contributor to the scientific management literature, echoes that observation. The idea and practice of scientific management was a key to the U.S. achieving it's past position of international industrial dominance. It was the creation of assembly lines and learning how to manage (coordinate) large numbers of specialized workers that was a catalyst to increased industrial output. The application of principles of management to mass production resulted in greater production efficiency. Output increased significantly, and "economies of scale" became one of the more prominent organizing principles. Efficiency was declared to be associated with the size of the organization. The larger the organization the greater the presumed efficiency. The average cost of management declined the more units it effectively managed. Labor productivity also increased with the efficiency and wage rates increased accordingly. National economic growth and a growing middle class which sustained growing mass consumption were important outcomes.

The effectiveness of the principles of management in the workplace led to their being extended and becoming and integral part of doing things throughout the whole society (Edson, 1982). They became the society's organizing principles: applied not only in the work place but in schools, health care, social services, government bureaucracies, even churches and charitable organizations. As suggested by Reich:

> "Managerialism offered America a set of organizing principles at precisely the time (the 1920's) when many Americans sensed a need for greater organization, and these principles soon shaped every dominant American institution precisely as they helped those institutions become dominant. The logic of routine, large-scale manufacturing first shaped it's original business environment and then permeated the larger social environment. An American society embraced and duplicated it because it was the very engine of prosperity." (1983:149)

The principles of mass and management were combined to create the mass media, mass transit, mass merchandising, etc.

The Effect of Management on Education

As the principles of management were being extended to education and being adopted by schools a perceptible shift in educational practices, methods, and goals occurred. Schools became institutions to be managed, efficiency became a standard for judging management effectiveness, and management was found to work best (be more efficient) if both inputs and outputs became more standardized. How education occurred became a measure for evaluating its effectiveness. Uniqueness (of student, teacher, locality, etc.) was presumed to contribute to inefficiency and was therefore to be discouraged. Innovations were encouraged but were largely addressed to methods of improving efficiency (output per unit of input). Consequently by the 1960's schools had become strongly committed to the economic principles of standardized mass production and attendant notions of efficiency - an organizational ideology which inspired the title of David Tyack's educational critique "The One Best System" (1974). It was the extension of this organizational ideology of the school to rural localities (consolidation was broadly instigated to achieve organizational efficiencies) (Sher, 1977) that was an important feature of what we referred to above as the incorporation of rural institutions into a national system. Locality agendas, including rural localities, became subordinate to the national agenda.

Consequently schools were becoming efficient and effective agencies of industrial socialization as well as providing for basic education and, in more recent years, for student's marketable skills. By the 1960's educators and economic leaders alike were becoming committed to employability of graduates as a major expectation of the role of schools. A key to success in the mass society was mobility - geographically, socially, occupationally. Providing students with the capability of being mobile became a prominent public expectation. A mass society also produced a mass labor market that the products of the schools were to be prepared for.

Where the regular school was failing to provide marketable skills and mobility, vocational training schools and programs were added to provide an alternative track. To a very great extent therefore education and the economy consummated a symbiotic relationship. It was not so much a case of negotiating an explicit partnership regarding the content of education and training as it was a case of parallel development through employing common methods of production. Students who successfully worked their way through the school system found few surprises when they entered the world of work.

Both the schooling experience and the skills acquired contributed to the human capital an industrial society was demanding. Human capital embodies the notion that students acquire both work and organizational habits and attitudes to function in the world of work, and also the manual and mental skills that are applicable to production (Bowman, 1979).

Education and Economic Development - A National Perspective

Evolution of the relationship between education and economy makes it difficult to interpret and understand change in either one without recourse to the other. Many contend that the economy's influence on the school has been more profound than the school's influence on the economy. The role of the economy in shaping the ideology and practice of schooling is emphasized by one author who notes that:

> "Between 1880 and 1920 a relationship was established between work and schooling that became permanently embedded in both the structure and ideology of American public schooling. This relationship - manifested in a new belief that public schools could, and indeed should, prepare youth for work - rapidly became a part of the predominant orthodoxy that continues to shape and limit educational thought and practice today." (Edson, 1982:145)

But the contribution of education to economic growth has also become a cornerstone of economic orthodoxy and public values. Schultz (1961) won the Nobel Prize for his work identifying how much of America's past century of economic growth could be attributed to the "human capital" produced by schooling and education. Schultz and others documented that the amount of the nation's economic growth couldn't be accounted for solely by increases in the quantity of land, labor, and capital (Williamson, 1979). Human capital theory asserts that it is changes in the quality of labor (skills, habits) that accounts for the difference.

In addition one of the most firmly held beliefs among Americans of all socio-economic levels, despite quite a bit of evidence to the contrary, is that education is the path to upward mobility, the "way to get ahead", the great equalizer (Bowles and Gintis, 1974; Jencks, 1972). The conviction is that both individual and public investments in education are rewarded in the market place.

The importance of the connection between economy and education is underscored by the amount of public attention being focused on each today. It is doubtful for example, if one could find many state governors who wouldn't identify the two major concerns of their state as education and economic growth. States might differ only in the order they report those two concerns, or which they feel is cause and which is effect - more investment in education to produce economic growth, or more economic growth in order to be able to afford education. However a consensus is moving toward the side of education being a "cause" of economic development, to wit a lead story from the St. Louis Dispatch:

> "The future of Missouri's economy and job opportunities hinges on dramatic improvements in the quality of the state's public education, says a report issued Thursday by a high-level panel commissioned by Governor John Ashcroft... There will be no significant economic opportunities unless we have a strong education system and a high literacy rate' said Missouri Secretary of State Roy Blunt, a co-chairman of the panel, which is called the Missouri Opportunity 2000 Commission."

The foundation of public concern appears to be the recent performance of both education and the economy. We described above the concern for a growing lack of competitiveness in the economy. But on the education side, the Nation At Risk (1983), and many subsequent critiques of the performance of the educational system have captured national attention. The nation has been stimulated to wonder why, as its investment in education has increased both absolutely and relatively over the past two decades, educational performance, measured both by student test scores, and indirectly by the productivity of the graduates, has declined (Thurow, 1985). This perception of economic and educational performance problems has emerged in tandem, and is inspiring some new perspectives about the education - economic development interrelationship.

Responses to perceptions of performance deficiencies have taken two general forms: preservation and change. Preservationists argue that we must get back to "basics" in both the economy and education - that the solutions lie in doing a better job of what we did in the past - reindustrialize the economy and concentrate on the 3 R's in education. Advocates of change argue on the other hand, that the methods and emphases of the past are a part of the problem and that there must be fundamental change in methods and approaches both in school and at the work place; that we must "work smarter" and that we must be more innovative, creative, and entrepreneurial both economically and educationally. We will take the side of change in suggesting ways in which education, broadly conceived, and schools in particular might participate more directly in attempts to revitalize rural communities.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION IN THE 1980'S

The predominant strategy of past rural economic development efforts leaned strongly toward rural industrialization and facilitating the out-migration of rural youth for whom employment prospects at home were not bright (Hobbs, 1979; Tweeten, 1980). Rural development was to be achieved a combination of addition (adding industry) and subtraction (facilitating outmigration so there would be fewer to divide an often shrinking rural income pie). Education was allocated a prominent role in the migration strategy (skilled and educated youth had much better prospects for economically successful migration) but only a modest role in industrialization. The effect of education on industrialization was generally indirect. Evidence indicates for example that rural communities making greater investments in education were somewhat more effective in attracting industry, ceteris paribus (Smith, et. al. 1980; Tweeten, 1980).

The industrialization strategy, much more than outmigration, involved federal, state and local collaboration. Federal government made large infrastructure investments that facilitated industrial relocation (programs such as the Appalachia Regional Commission played a prominent role). Investment in vocational education facilities was also a part of this initiative. States recruited industry and worked on making an attractive industrial environment, including tax concessions, and localities recruited and added other local inducements (Summers, 1982). These helping hands of government added to the inclination of many industries to move from areas of higher cost to lower cost labor - and they moved.

The fact that these initiatives were associated with rural industrialization success has made the strategy difficult to set aside (Sher, 1986). While we used the past tense in describing these efforts they actually remain the predominant rural development strategy today. There are few rural communities of any size that don't retain an Industrial Development Commission. However federal financial support for rural development has slowed to a trickle. State governments have taken up much of the slack under "New Federalism" and have intensified their industrial development efforts. However, as noted in the Post-Dispatch quote above, a broader notion of economic development closely tied to education investments, has begun to replace the industrial relocation strategy.

The Opportunity Structure for Rural Community Economic Development

Within this context we cite the following as some of the factors on which an alternative rural economic development strategy should be based:

1. For the past 20 years there has been virtually no employment growth in goods-producing industries. Natural resource industries have exhibited a similar trend (Garnick, 1985; Tienda, 1986; Tweeten, 1986). Those trends are likely to continue. However there is some potential for rural communities in "adding value" to the raw materials they have traditionally produced.

2. Conversely employment in service industries increased rapidly in both metro and nonmetro areas from 1969-1984. Much of this growth appears to be associated with enduring changes in demography, household income, consumer tastes and technology. Nationally this growth will likely continue, but where and what is a question that confronts rural communities.

However non-metro service sector employment growth has trailed the rate of metro area growth during the past 8 years after matching the metro growth rate from 1969-1976. The earlier rapid rural service employment growth was associated with the corresponding growth in goods-producing industries. As rural goods-producing employment growth slowed, so too did service employment (Bender, 1987). However Smith and

Pulver emphasize that there is a substantial potential for nonmanufacturing business development in rural areas (1981). They emphasize the presence of "niches" available to exploit both for expanding the community export base and in providing services for which there is a locally viable demand. One source of income and employment multipliers that many rural communities have overlooked is the increased amount of cash transfer payments received by retired persons. Summers and Hirschl (1985) report for example that approximately $4,000 of Social Security payments (not counting related income from other sources such as retirement programs, dividends, interest, etc.) is sufficient to produce one job. This compares with the need for over $91,000 in manufacturing payroll and $65,000 in agricultural sales to produce one additional job.

Because of the growing significance of service sector employment, some analysis has been directed toward differentiating the services sector (Armington and Odle, 1980; Noyelle, 1983). "Advanced services" (Noyelle, 1983,) which includes those having a substantial scientific, knowledge, or technological foundation, have become a major component of metropolitan economic development but have contributed little to rural community development (Tweeten, 1984). Some contend however that there is a potential for more knowledge-based rural development.

3. Knowledge based rural economic development is being advocated more strongly (Deaton, 1986; Hobbs, 1986; Reich, 1983; Tweeten, 1984) as a concomitant of industrial restructuring. It is argued that the intentional application of knowledge and technology as principal production inputs holds an important key to future economic development at all levels. The admonition is that we must work "smarter". Some of

the spectacular growth in "high tech" industries has reinforced this orientation. But knowledge based economic development is far more comprehensive than "high tech". Productivity in virtually all sectors can be substantially increased by the more effective and deliberate application of knowledge (Deaton, 1986; Thurow, 1985).

While many are justifiably skeptical of the rural development potential of technology based enterprise (e.g. Tweeten, 1984) it is useful to recall that one of the most significant knowledge based industries of this century was the hybridization of agricultural seeds and livestock. This industry had its origin in such rural places as Coon Rapids and Hampton, Iowa, Dekalb, Illinois, etc.

Important to the rural development potential of knowledge based enterprise however is fashioning new linkages between rural communities and/or entrepreneurs and sources of specialized knowledge, such as for example state and regional colleges and universities (Hobbs, 1986).

4. Although it has been recognized for several years that a majority of the nation's new employment is being generated by small business (Birch, 1979; 1985), that realization is just beginning to occupy a more visible position among economic development strategies. Job creation is beginning to replace "smoke stack" chasing as a strategy. That shift is supported by the better odds for success in job creation, retention and expansion. As indicated by Campbell:

> "Today of the 360,000 potential businesses to be chased, ten percent expand or relocate annually. However, of these 36,000 expansions and relocations only 5 percent will relocate in another state. Aiming for these 1800 relocations are many of the 12,000 - 15,0000 development and redevelopment councils, commissions and agencies." (1985:43)

Conversely Campbell and associates cite a Wall Street Journal article which reports that, of the 17 million American small businesses, about one million have both the inclination and capacity for substantial growth and significant job generation. They suggest that one million small firms with a capacity for growth present better odds than pursuing one of the 1800 relocations.

However some recent research (Armington and Odle, 1982; Miller, 1985) has questioned how much employment growth is actually attributable to small independent enterprise. These researchers find that a substantial amount of the growth in businesses classified as small, is actually owned and/or controlled by larger firms. Despite these caveats, "thinking small" has become an inhabitant in the domain of economic development strategy at all levels. It is also a perspective more in accord with rural realities.

5. Recognition of the importance of small business to job creation has contributed to the "entrepreneur" becoming the new darling of economic development. Strategies are emerging which emphasize finding, training, and supporting entrepreneurs who have a capacity to initiate new enterprises with growth potential (Pulver, 1985; 1986).

A strength of the small business-entrepreneur strategy for smaller rural localities is that small enterprises can meet important local needs, be more responsive to local influences, adapt to local conditions and may be less likely to migrate (Sheridan, 1985).

Although small businesses are more likely to "belong" to their community, and to cluster around less "cyclically sensitive industries" (Sheridan, 1985) there are some downsides. They tend to be concentrated in low wage industries and their risk of "failure" is presumed to be high. However the late Albert Shapero (1983) debunks the presumed failure rate of entrepreneurs. He contends that the reported failure rates are inflated - that many of the "failures" are "repeat offenders"; entrepreneurs who begin several different enterprises before they find one that makes it. They contribute to failure rates without having actually failed.

Also relatively little appears to be known about the difference in failure rate between small communities and large ones. Small communities can be presumed to present fewer risks if the enterprise meets local needs.

Important to rural economic development is that small business/enterprise is within the resource capability of most rural communities, can provide an economic transition, and promises more certain, although possibly less spectacular, returns on investment than putting all the economic development eggs in the basket of industrial relocation. Several researchers also emphasize that there are more niches for knowledge based and sustainable small enterprises, that combine both higher wages and growth potential, than have been filled in rural areas (Deaton, 1986; Flora and Darling, 1986).

6. Economic development, especially at state and local levels, has largely been the domain of business people and economic development specialists. But a viable and equitable community economy is everyone's business and it is now being emphasized that economic development efforts are more likely to be successful if the base of collaboration is broadened - if more segments of the community are involved (Flora and

Darling, 1986; Green, 1984; Deaton, 1986; Sher, 1986; Wilkinson, 1986). Some analysts (Summers, 1986; Wilkinson, 1986) contend that there is a difference between development of the community and development in the community. Economic development can occur within the community but contribute little to a stronger sense of community. The argument is that development of the community can contribute to economic development but that the reverse doesn't necessarily follow. They contend that new local economic development partnerships must be forged. Flora and Darling emphasize the value of creating a broadly representative community umbrella organization as a necessary feature of development both in and of the community.

The Southern Growth Policies Board (1984), Green (1984) and others emphasize the need for new and different kinds of public-private partnerships in the name of economic development. Even as uncoupling is being described as a feature of industrial restructuring, new forms of coupling (networking has become a buzz word) are being emphasized as essential to achieving goals of broad interest such as economic development.

In summary the current opportunity structure for rural community economic development is a combination of good news and bad. The bad comes in the form of little growth potential for those sectors that have served as the backbone of rural economies. The good news however is that emerging perspectives on economic development better "fit" the circumstances of most rural communities and present therefore viable alternatives to the past preoccupation with industrial development. We turn our attention now to specific features of rural community economies which must be taken into account, incorporated into needs assessments, in mounting appropriate and locality relevant new community economic development initiatives.

Some Rural-Specific Economic Development Constraints

Virtually all rural communities, save those who have been literally swallowed by metropolitan sprawl, are characterized by population dispersion. The dispersion poses unique problems in providing quality community services at a low cost per capita (Tweeten, 1986). A part of the rural community development agenda must be addressed to how to overcome the costs of space in continuing to provide needed public services, especially education.

Compared with metropolitan areas rural counties have approximately twice the rate of self-employment as metropolitan counties. Self-employment is often the only way a trained person in a small community can market their skill (Sher, 1977). The prevalence of self-employment however causes widely used economic indicators of economic distress such as unemployment, to be invalid measures (Korsching and Sapp, 1977; Korsching and Lasley, 1985; Tweeten, 1986). The actual rate of unemployment in a rural area has been found to be several times higher than the official reported rate (Cole, 1984: Korsching and Lasley, 1985). This poses a distinct disadvantage to rural workers since being "officially unemployed" is often a condition for eligibility for various services including subsidized training.

Consequently the degree of rural community economic distress may be much higher than reflected by unemployment statistics. Underemployment of large numbers of self-employed persons is a more prominent rural problem than unemployment.

In general rural communities have lower per capita income, higher poverty rates, higher dependency rates and lower labor force participation rates. These are all triggers for various kinds of public labor force training and placement programs and policies. Yet because of population dispersion and the prevalence of rural self-employment, access to these services is difficult, if non-existent, in many rural localities. Tweeten concludes:

> "My conclusion is that public general education, research, and welfare programs have had a large and generally positive socioeconomic impact but that public labor force policies .... for disadvantaged workers have had, at best, a mixed record." (1986:8)

Therefore either improved access to such services or alternative means of providing them, is of great potential importance to rural communities, especially those undergoing major economic dislocations as in the case of farm crisis communities or those experiencing a factory closing.

Rural communities are characterized by another feature which must be embodied in any intentional effort to enlist local education efforts in the cause of economic development. Rural communities have been labeled "Micropolitan" (Tweeten and Brinkman, 1977). These micro labor markets are typically characterized by a diversity of occupations and trades but with few occupants of each. Consequently there is a limited replacement or expansion demand for any trade or skill. A community might offer a good economic niche for say, a trained body and fender person, but would be unable to accommodate all the graduates of a body and fender class. But matching this potential for productive placement in the micro-economy runs counter to prevailing methods of skill training. Training is typically offered to "classes of students" following the dictates of efficiency in training. But the micro-market doesn't have the capacity to absorb all the trainees - the option for most is either to leave, or to seek employment in an occupation or trade other than what they were trained for. Neither of those options produces much of a return on the locality's training investment. There is a need in rural localities to modify approaches to training to better meet local needs and market capacities.

We turn now to some opportunities for schools for join forces with other sectors of their communities in the quest for revitalization.

Supporting Rural Revitalization: Some Roles for Small Schools

Because rural schools have generally become a part of a national system of education, their education and training role has typically been cast in the context of national, rather than specific local, manpower and educational needs and opportunities. Despite our interest in ways schools might contribute more directly to local economic development, we emphasize first that rural schools will continue to have a paramount role in preparing students to participate in the broader society - including migration to sources of advanced education and/or diversified and growing employment opportunities. Even if rural economic development were to "take-off", it is unlikely that all, or even most, rural youth would be able to fulfill their educational and occupational aspirations within the community. For students intending to remain in the community, equipping them for geographic and occupational mobility is no less important. Persons lacking abilities for migration are not likely to make productive contributions to the local economy either.

But if there has been an imbalance in the orientation of community schools it has been on the side of neglecting the locality as an object of educational and training attention. That imbalance is largely a consequence of the standardization of educational curriculum and procedure that has evolved. The locality is a fertile and accessible but underutilized educational environment. As Eliot Wigginton (1986) has described so well and convincingly in his portrayal of the Foxfire experience, it is likely that the lessons of school will be more enduring if they are connected with the world of experience and familiarity. We are equally convinced that local economic development efforts will not travel far on ignorance of the locality and how it operates.

We divide our discussion of the role of the schools into two parts: (1) changes in educational content, methods and styles that would better meet changing human capital needs of both community and society, and (2) specific methods to more directly connect education and activities of the school with community economic development.

Some Added Components of Human Capital

Industrial and societal restructuring have not diminished the salience of the idea of human capital. Indeed more attention is being directed to the importance of education and human resources than ever.

But it is the kind of human capital has that become an issue as well as the need for more of it.

> "The real issue is that human beings are relatively immobile on the globe compared to financial capital. Because of this, investments in skills, knowledge, and team learning are coming to be the key determinants of national well-being... (There is a) need to shift citizens into higher-valued production." (Reich, 1983:266)

The quantity and quality of human capital available is an especially significant constraint to rural community development - migration drained it and rural industrialization did little to create a local demand for it.

But we suggest that meeting this human capital need will require more than producing, or retaining in the community, more graduates from the existing conventional programs. Some adjustments are required - new and different skills and new methods of providing them are essential to serving new approaches to economic development and responding to some of the niches in rural localities. Some of the components of a human capital construct relevant to job creation and rural economic development might include:

1. The need for basic education to provide the skills on which to build other competencies. This is the foundation. Everything else is secondary. Without a quality basic education students will be hampered in whatever they do and wherever they go - including remaining in the locality.

The declining economic base of many rural communities is further jeopardizing the ability of their school to provide a sound basic education. Consolidation of schools has been the orthodox solution. But in many parts of the country population dispersion makes further consolidation impractical (Nachtigal, 1982). In the face of other threats to the community rural people have gained a renewed appreciation of the importance of the school to the life of the community. Correspondingly resistance to consolidation has grown.

Many rural communities will therefore need to seek creative ways of providing quality basic education through the secondary level. Sharing of teachers and other services has become a widely practiced adaptation (Tevis, 1986). Telecommunications technology in many forms has become a promising and cost-effective alternative for meeting the need. Undoubtedly other innovations will appear as alternatives to closing a school and/or consolidations.

Industrial restructuring has contributed to a growing recognition that all students have a need for academic fundamentals. There has been a tendency to place vocationally oriented students in a separate, less academically rigorous track. There is a need for vocational students to have much the same training and background in the basic skills and sciences as their college bound peers. To be lacking those capabilities is a virtual guarantee of less remunerative and productive employment.

We add the need for adult basic education. Lacking a basic education foundation, it is likely that the only alternative to unemployment will be in what are often termed "dead-end" jobs. The base of literacy, skill, competence has to be broad both locally and nationally. This is especially important for rural localities because adults are there and usually have a stronger commitment to staying in the locality. In fact too often in the past rural communities have been populated by the

"People Left Behind". Community economic development requires that the smallest possible number be "left behind". Shifting adults to higher value production is an important rural economic development strategy. As one author observes: "To work, modern economies need a mass well-educated labor force. An educated elite does not suffice. Illiteracy hurts the literate." (Thurow, 1985:187)

2. Students, future workers, must be more capable of innovation. To be innovative one must understand the problem - not some narrow slice of it embedded in a highly structured and organized production process. One must understand how "the pieces fit together", if one is to understand how they "might fit together" differently and more effectively.

Innovation is more likely to occur in an environment which expects innovation and which stresses flexibility and adaptation. Highly structured training in highly structured organizations is unlikely to be very productive of flexible and innovative individuals. Flexibility is an acquired skill as well as an adaptation. If flexibility is discouraged, innovation is likely to be discouraged as well.

If we wish to teach flexibility and adaptiveness the training environment must incorporate those features. McDonald and Thompson (1984) report on their experience in the computer lab of one New England small school. The lab was open for student and faculty use. The authors remarked on the apparent lack of order (structure) in the lab: many small groups and individuals simultaneously working on different problems. The instructor replied: "I call that my school store style of management.

School stores tend to run themselves, don't they?" That is a sharply variant management style from what is most often confronted in schools.

3. There is a growing demand for generalists, in addition to new kinds of specialists. The need for persons having multiple skills in especially great in smaller rural communities. Micro labor markets can absorb few narrowly trained specialists; there is generally a need for more "jacks (jills) of all trades". This is especially for training future entrepreneurs. The self-employed and entrepreneurs especially, need to have multiple skills including business management, record keeping, etc. Yet those are emphases often found lacking in vocational training.

In the rural environment starting one's own business may be the best, and only, way of marketing a trade. Yet there has been an unwritten, but long term, bias in education and training - that employees are being trained. But as we have noted that frequently misses the mark in smaller communities. "Looking for a job" can obscure the presence of a viable self-employment opportunity.

In writing of the need for broadening vocational training Stu Rosenfeld recently coined the term "renaissance technicians" (1986). He writes that:

> "High school vocational education will have to stop thinking of itself primarily as a terminal program aimed at immediate employment and instead think about placing greater emphasis on preparation for additional technical education... Unlike the Renaissance man of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries, who could acquire a wide range of skills and diverse knowledge because the world was simpler, the Renaissance Technician of today and tomorrow must acquire broader based skills and knowledge because the world is more complex and changing more quickly. To the Renaissance Man, diversity and adaptability were luxuries; to the Renaissance Technician, they are

necessities, critical to the successful modernization of the South's economy." (1987:2)

4. Innovation stands a better chance of occurring if one is working as a member of a small group on a larger problem. This is an essential component of what Reich calls "flex-system" production (1983). It implies an individual capable of being a contributing member of a small production team whose task is not only to produce, but also to solve problems. While innovation is almost always a product of some individual's inspiration, possibilities for innovation are enhanced by an individual's participation in a small, problem-focused group.

If individuals are to learn how to work effectively in small, problem oriented groups, their training cannot be limited to individually acquired skills in an environment which is structured to emphasize interpersonal competition. A part of their training should include team work. Also a system that concentrates its attention on evaluating individual performance and attainment with no attention to evaluating group performance and/or individual's contribution to it, is unlikely to be effective in teaching team work.

We might add a parenthetical note. We contend that rural schools have a distinctly greater probability of producing educational innovations than their larger counterparts, precisely because they are small and have the greater potential flexibility and adaptability inherent in small organizations. Besides rural schools are confronting problems which necessitate innovation. Rather than the small rural school problem continuing to be defined by how they can catch up with their larger counterparts, rural schools in coming years may be the source of innovations having broad educational application. Instead of followers rural schools could become leaders.

The relationship of organizational size to innovation is supported by a National Academy of Science study (Gellman Research Associates, Inc., 1982) which reported that small firms were 20 some times more likely to produce innovations from government contracts than were larger firms.

5. Continuing Education - In periods of rapid change the half-life of any skill is substantially diminished. We have begun to understand this and are now placing greater emphasis on adult education and training. Our traditional ideas about who is a student and how old they are, are beginning to change. But we are only partially there. To place an equal emphasis on continuing adult education will include a re-evaluation of the school and its purposes. Recently the superintendent of an Iowa rural school reported that 10 years ago their school had an enrollment of 450 in grades K-12. But because of the farm crisis, population loss, and low birth rates their K-12 enrollment dropped drastically. In response they changed their school priorities and were now continuing to serve 450 community residents - 50 in pre-school, 250 in K-12, and 150 adults (Tevis, 1986). That change reflected a substantial change in the concept of the school in the community.

Training of adults especially, needs to be more cognizant of skills that can fit local market places or which can be linked to local economic development efforts, because adults are generally less mobile than youth in the short run.

Rural schools generally do not have the resources to expand the school program to provide adult basic education. But there are many other sources of such training, e.g. manpower programs, university extension courses, community colleges, etc. While such programs are generally available they are seldom effectively coordinated to serve specific locality resource needs. The school as the community's most visible and prominent education agency, could take a more active part in helping to broker such outside resources and in tailoring those programs to specific community needs. In effect, through collaboration with other resource agencies, could become more of a community learning resource center.

6. There is a need for community education and for combining classroom training with experience. A school makes a contribution to its community's development when it places some educational emphasis on the locality - its natural resources, its economic base, its organizations and institutions, its history... how it works. Understanding of the complexity of the modern world begins at home. Unless students (and community residents) understand their locality they will have greater difficulty understanding what goes on beyond it. As we have emphasized, rural communities have become inextricably linked into the national and international economy in many tangible ways - from credit cards to wheat prices. Feasible community economic development is not likely to occur without community understanding of the limitations and opportunities produced by these linkages.

It is not valid to assume that merely living in a place translates into understanding how that place operates. It is fair to reason also that for students, increased dependence on a text book driven curriculum has been at the sacrifice of an understanding of locality. We don't subscribe to the notion that this is a zero-sum game - that devoting attention to understanding the locality occurs at the expense of mastering the basic core curriculum. We feel that Wigginton (Sometimes a Shining Moment: 1986) makes a compelling case for the educational value of making connections between concepts and local realities.

Whether more attention to locality is supported by local education officials or not, there are powerful reasons why it is seldom done. One is that the professional staff of rural schools is already spread thinly in covering the core curriculum and has little time to devote to producing additional materials. A second is that professional training generally fails to provide teachers with the conceptual tools to link classroom with community. But we suggest there are community development benefits to be gained from turning to other sources for such materials. For example: (1) Students as a resource. The value of experience in learning is generally conceded. It has been especially stressed that students not only learn, but gain motivation, by working on things that adults value. Yet students are typically the most-under-utilized resource of a school because they are seldom thought of as a resource. (2) Turning to citizens and organizations in the community for help. There should be no reason to believe that citizens would be any less willing to contribute to the instructional program of the school than to raise money to buy band uniforms. The process of producing such materials can have an important adult education value as well and contribute to establishing development relationships between school and community organizations. (3) Existing materials. In most communities, and certainly in every county, there are groups, organizations and agencies which have produced reports, plans, and educational materials for some other purpose. Included are such organizations as the Cooperative Extension Service (of the state land grant university), Soil Conservation Service, regional planning commissions, local historical societies, county government, etc. Implicit in using any of these sources of educational materials is a spirit of cooperation and collaboration which can break down institutional barriers and make a contribution to community development.

The school professional staff's lack of time to produce such materials can actually be a blessing in disguise. Turning to other sources can make an added contribution to student and community development.

The above has been an explication of some principles, extracted from a variety of sources, which, if implemented, could be expected to add strong support to rural community economic development efforts. How such principles would be applied would be expected to vary from community to community depending on local circumstances. To conclude we turn now to a brief description of some specific projects and innovations which have attempted to explicitly combine local education and local economic development.

Some Promising Innovations:

We know of no innovative approach which incorporates more of the principles suggested above than the idea of School Based Development Enterprises (SBDE) advanced by Jonathan Sher (1977) and championed by many others including especially Paul Delargy of the University of Georgia. The concept has been applied successfully in rural schools from Georgia to Alaska. The Foxfire program and books are perhaps the most well-known example of an SBDE.

In brief the SBDE idea involves the school participating with its community in doing a needs assessment to determine what enterprises the community needs and could feasibly support. In further collaboration with community (or outside agency) the school establishes and operates a business enterprise both to provide the community with a needed business or service and to provide meaningful, experiential, vocational education for participating students.

In effect the idea of an SBDE embodies many of the concepts that are incorporated into the more recent idea of business incubators (Brooks,1986; Brockhaus, 1984; Buck, 1984; Green, 1984; Meyers and Hobbs, 1986). Incubators "hatch" new businesses by providing various kinds of assistance to fledgling entrepreneurs until an enterprise can make it on it's own. The basic idea is not for the incubator to remain associated with the business but to "spin it off" and turn its attention to other start-ups. Incubators typically involve public-private collaboration (Brockhaus, 1984; Green, 1984). That concept is now being widely used in technology based enterprises and a number of public universities have established such incubators (Buck, 1984; Meyers and Hobbs, 1986). The idea of incubators has promise for rural community economic development but has not diffused widely. As noted the SBDE concept is similar in orientation and intended purpose. We will return to some further thoughts about SBDE's below, but first some additional innovations.

Rosenfeld (1985) provides descriptions of innovations in four rural communities which have produced explicit school-community economic development partnerships. One of these, Hartwell, Georgia, involves a number of SBDE's oriented toward further capitalizing on the community's potential for tourism. Enterprises include a youth-operated retail store, a tourist excursion train, and a community theatre. Important features of this experience is collaboration with the Small Business Development Center of the University of Georgia and utilization of JTPA funds.

In Byng, Oklahoma the students built the school:

> "...Spread over 72 acres, the district uses some 48 separate buildings for the three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The students themselves, with the support and cooperation of local construction companies and trade unions, built 40 of the buildings including cafeteria, gym, library... This unusual school represents not just student labor, but the cooperation between school administrators, vocational educators, and community that permeates the town on all education-related matters." (Rosenfeld, 1985:9)

In Shelbyville, Tennessee, with the assistance of a grant from a local industrial firm "Service Plus" was established which involved summer placement of teachers in agencies throughout the community. That experience not only added to teacher salaries and to the availability of community services but also improved teacher's ability to understand student's problems and to incorporate a community perspective in their teaching.

In Potosi, Missouri, Contract Vocational Education involves enlisting business people and local trades persons as one-on-one vocational teachers. The approach adds a wide diversity of trades and occupations available to students for training, short-cuts job placement for some students, is cost-effective, and brings school and business community into collaboration.

There are many sources of creative ideas that have worked in some places. For example: a publication by the American Association of School Administrators - Creative Ideas for Small School (1981); a publication on Exemplary Rural Education and Economic Development Linkages by the National Institute of Work and Learning (1980); a joint publication of the Institute for Educational Leadership, Inc., and the Small Business Foundation of America, Inc., (Danzberger and Hitch, 1985) which details numerous ideas and experiences for exchange programs for small businesses and schools.

However the specific ideas, while useful to know about, are not as important as the intention of school and community to become active partners in improving the quality of life of their community. Rural communities are short-handed in their efforts to achieve sustainable economic development and can not afford to overlook any pertinent resource. In an era when knowledge-based economic development is advocated as the key to industrial restructuring and economic competitiveness, creatively fashioning new relationships between school and community has to occupy a position high on the list of priorities.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH FOR DARYL HOBBS

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Daryl Hobbs was born and raised in rural Iowa and received his PH.D. degree in Rural Sociology from Iowa State University in 1963. He served for 3 years on the faculty at Iowa State as a specialist in rural development. He joined the faculty of the University of Missouri in 1964 and served as chairman of the departments of Sociology and Rural Sociology from 1967-1970. In 1973 he became Director of Rural Development for the University and was involved in organizing a number of rural economic development and agricultural projects.

The Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis which Hobbs directs, has a computerized information file on Missouri counties including population, economic, agricultural and other trend information. The purpose of the system is to provide Missouri communities and organizations with current information.

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REACTION TO PAPER BY DARYL HOBBS: LEARNING TO FIND THE "NICHES": RURAL EDUCATION AND VITALIZING RURAL COMMUNITIES

Richard Tulikangas
Vermont Department of Education

Prepared for the National Rural Education Research Forum
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ABSTRACT

Desperately Seeking "Niches":
The Productive Union of
Rural Education and Rural Development

by

Richard Tulikangas

Vermont Department of Education

This paper is a response to "Learning to Find the Niches": Rural Education and Vitalizing Rural Communities" by Daryl Hobbs (University of Missouri, 1987). The author finds the Hobbs paper a well researched and rich description of the economic and educational developments over the past twenty years that describe where we are now with rural education and development efforts. This information is effectively used to outline some areas of promise for future collaborative efforts.

The author also finds the Hobbs paper, however, to be short on specific descriptions of 'niches' that have been found or need to be discovered. The considerable attention to historical and other contexts is also viewed as more than necessary, possibly resulting in less attention to actually finding the niches.

A point raised by Hobbs and emphasized by the author is that rural communities are extremely diverse requiring successful approaches based on the local reality. The smallness and richness of rural areas are seen as community assets.

The other major points of the Hobbs paper are reviewed, reaffirming the need for attention to entrepreneurial and small business management skill development, forming networks and partnerships among all community resources, and supporting continuing education and youth employment options.

The author also emphasizes the need to recognize students as resources within the school as well as in the broader community. Particular attention is additionally focused on the current state of school management, which does not foster entrepreneurial thinking. It is suggested that the business community can contribute to progressive reorganization of schools.

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Richard Tulikangas was born and raised in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. He received his B.S. in Natural Resources from the University of Michigan in 1979, and an M.Ed. in Organizational and Human Resource Development from the University of Vermont in 1986. He also studied worker management and participation in Yugoslavia in 1977 and 1981. His professional work experience over the past several years has been in the field of youth employment at the local and state levels. Mr. Tulikangas currently serves as the Director of the Exemplary Youth Employment Program and Jobs for Vermont Graduates for the Vermont Department of Education.

Depending on one's perspective, rural education can be looked upon as in a state of serious peril or enormous opportunity. The same can be said for rural economic development. In this context I found Daryl Hobbs' "Learning to Find the "Niches": Rural Education and Vitalizing Rural Communities" a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between rural education and rural development that comes out solidly on the opportunity side of the scale.

"Niches" (which I will use to refer to Mr. Hobbs' paper for the sake of brevity) provides a substantial degree of various historical, structural, and organizational backgrounds that aid in understanding the current state of affairs in the rural community relative to its educational system. As a non-acamedician and non-expert in either rural education or rural economic development, I found this to be both valuable and limiting.

The discussion is valuable in terms of setting the stage generally for what types of businesses and approaches are likely to succeed economically and what kinds of changes and outreach are needed from rural schools. The section on "Added Components of Human Capital" is particularly good at identifying key change components to facilitate rural revitalization.

At the same time, however, the extensive discussion of contexts seems to have resulted in less attention devoted to defining or finding the "niches". This, it would seem, was the intended focus of the paper. Yet, other than school-based development enterprises (SBDEs), few specific viable approaches are discussed. The reader is instead referred to other sources for creative ideas that work.

As a 'lay' person I also found the numerous contextual overlays slightly confusing. The text shifts between current and historical, economic and educational, national and regional environments, leaving me to piece together a coherent whole.

The task of finding the niches, however, is truly a difficult and challenging one. Hobbs accurately points out that there is no one single rural "situation" - that local factors vary greatly requiring strategies built on a careful assessment of local realities. With this in mind, Hobbs does an excellent job of identifying the generalizable economic factors (e.g., knowledge-based enterprise, small business sector growth, increased cash transfer payment received by retired persons, new public-private partnerships) that are likely to impact local 'niche development.'

The following is a more detailed response to some of the major points made in "Niches".

1. Rural America is more economically dependent and more economically and socially diverse now than 20 years ago.

Hobbs lays out numerous trends to verify this point, including: regionalization of community services (health care, retail trade, education, government, etc.), incorporation of rural services into national systems, recent net migration of people from urban to rural areas, and the shift from agricultural to manufacturing industries (headquartered outside the area) as the local economic base.

The point is well documented as a general statement of what has happened to rural communities. My only caution in accepting such a description of 'how it is' in rural America is that, in fact, local conditions and situations vary tremendously. Jonathan Sher (1977) portrays the heterogeneity and complexity of rural communities best by pointing out that ..."fishing villages in Maine, coal company towns in Appalachia, farm communities in Iowa, Delta counties in Mississippi, recreation communities in Colorado, Indian reservations in South Dakota, small college towns in Minnesota, migrant settlements in Texas, retirement communities in Florida, and Alaskan native villages are all "rural."... To varying extents each of these has likely been touched by the trends Hobbs outlines, but the implications for advantageous local 'response' may vary considerably.

2. Prospects in natural resources and goods production industries are dim.

Again this general conclusion is well substantiated by the evidence presented in "Niches". It is not necessarily consistent, however, with another observation made by Hobbs, which is that "... a majority of the nation's new employment is being generated by small business." (p.2).

Not all small business sector growth is in services. I offer, as an example, part of the 'opportunity structure' in my home state of Vermont. The words 'Vermont made' are synonymous with quality, craftsmanship, durability, and care, based on a long standing reputation of the state's products.

In recent years many new Vermont small businesses that market Vermont made goods and repackaged natural resources (such as cheese, ice cream, maple products, wool, beer, wood products) have effectively capitalized on this reputation. These firms, though generally not large, have contributed significantly to local economic revitalization.

3. New rural development should take into account the job creating potential of small business and entrepreneurship.

Regarding small business development, as mentioned above, I agree that there is enormous potential both within service and goods-production areas. An important point made by the author is that "small business/enterprise is within the resource capability of most rural communities" (p.24). A further implication is that such enterprise, at least initially, is considerably more directed by and attentive to local factors than 'local' subsidiaries of big business.

Entrepreneurs have, in fact, become the new darlings of economic development as characterized by Peters and Waterman (1982), Naisbitt (1982) and others. Constantly we are confronted with more 'success stories' to verify this fact. An important question then becomes 'where do entrepreneurs come from?' This is not an urban/rural question but one that is important to ask educationally. Are there certain types of educational environments and opportunities that encourage and facilitate the development of young entrepreneurs?

As one of the too few among the converted, I believe that the school based development enterprise approach, for example, does work toward this end. SBDEs are set up to teach fundamental small business development and management skills through experience during the high school years. It thereby creates meaningful opportunities within the school context for potential entrepreneurs who also build a working knowledge of and commitment to the community. Other types of school/business partnerships will also likely have some positive impact in this way.

4. There is a need to pursue more knowledge based enterprise and to create new networks and partnerships.

A good case is made for concentrating efforts on knowledge based enterprise for new growth in all sectors. To do so the author recommends that new linkages be established between businesses and entrepreneurs and specialized knowledge sources such as regional colleges and universities - a sensible recommendation. A further point that should be made, however, is that it is an incumbent role of primary and secondary education to give students the fundamental academic ability to access and fully employ knowledge based economic resources. They must not only have a solid grounding in the basic academic skills needed to function optimally in any applied environment, but have had an opportunity to develop the problem-solving, risk-taking, team-building, and similar skills found in entrepreneurs and currently in such demand in business and industry.

Hobbs points out the potential conflict in educational reform between the preservationists (3 Rs) and the change advocates (more innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship). Although I agree with his leaning toward the change advocates in terms of needed emphasis, the ideal is a marriage between the two that would result in the best preparation of potential community developers.

The point about developing new partnerships and linkages is endorsed and recommended everywhere. The recent national report Investing in Our Children, (Committee for Economic Development, 1986) for example, identifies the collaboration between businesses and schools and one of its four primary focus areas for needed change in education. According to the report:

> "The business community is a legitimate part of the resurgence of interest in the public schools. Business has much to gain from improvement in the quality of the schools, and it has a responsibility for helping support and maintain that quality. Business also has a role in supporting adequate funding for the schools." (p.12)

In my own primary field of experience, youth employment, there are clear and definable benefits to participating young people when close working partnerships are formed between the school or agency and other community organizations and businesses. The collaboration results not only in a broader support network to facilitate individual successes, but, as Hobbs notes, in a breakdown of institutional barriers.

5. Human capital is a key to rural development and educational innovations are a key to producing it.

With all of the blind faith placed in technology and the financial resources to employ it in recent decades, the fundamental value of human capital still rises above. Hobbs points out many of the reasons it is 'more true' for rural communities where the primary available resources are the people who live there. An important point is made regarding the fact that community development is everyone's business. Development efforts are considerably more likely to succeed if the support base is broadened beyond business people and economic development specialists, and should certainly include educators.

Within the school environment the issue of developing and maximizing human capital also becomes pertinent. Perhaps one of the most important observations made in the paper is that students are not seen as resources of the school (much less the community). If they are not seen as resources, they certainly will not be treated as such. This point relates directly to issues concerning the organizational structure and management of schools.

Some recent educational researchers (e.g. Sizer,1985) point out that daily school environments, as they currently exist, consist of highly routinized, narrowly classified, carefully managed (by adults), short time blocks. Within this framework student activity is constantly directed according to prescribed guidelines and expected behaviors with an emphasis on interpersonal competition. This reflection of now outdated organizational management in industry is still alive and well in the schools. It is hardly an atmosphere conducive to innovation, creativity, confidence building, and taking initiative. It is, thereby, not a good investment in human capital.

Hobbs raises this issue but doesn't really give it its due when discussing needed changes in my opinion. The organizational structure and management of schools needs to change substantially to facilitate the growth of human capital, to understand and utilize students as resources, to foster the notions of team building and collaboration within the school itself and extending into the larger community. Rural schools, because of their size and flexibility, are in an advantageous position to make needed changes.

6. There is a need for new educational training options and quality continuing education to support community economic development.

The idea that schools serve a primary function of preparing students for work has long-standing roots (Edson 1982) as mentioned in "Niches". Recent reports and information from employers (Committee for Economic Development 1986, Hahn & Lerman 1985), however, clearly give the message that schools don't prepare students for the current labor market well at all (and often question whether they are prepared well for any aspect of adult living, other than college for some). This is partially because business and industry is no longer looking for obedient, unthinking occupants of routinized job slots.

Well developed youth employment program options can provide some unique opportunities during high school from both an educational and economic development perspective. An important aspect of the opportunity for school based employment and training options is that some students are simply not successful in classroom environments. Placement in a meaningful part-time job with quality supervision, on the other hand, can lead to significant confidence and esteem building through successful hands-on learning.

Schools and businesses can also work closely together to demonstrate the importance of basic academic skills through application in any work environment. This experience can and often does lead to greater motivation in the academic arena and provides students with a reality based sense of where to apply their skills once out of school.

Hobbs also emphasizes the need for more and better training options for adult learners to fully utilize that sector of available human capital. I agree that a great deal more attention is deserved in this area. New training programs for women in non-traditional jobs, single parents, and other adult learners have quickly filled to capacity in Vermont. This seems to verify the hidden unemployment (current official rate of 3.2% in Vermont) and underemployment that exists among these groups. Hobbs additionally points out the relative long term stability of adults in the community.

The fact that generalists with a strong foundation in basic academic skills are what's needed to succeed in small business and self-employment is also well made. This implies that substantial changes in the field of vocational education are also needed. The SBDE approach and other solid generalizable youth employment models such as Jobs for America's Graduates (Sum, 1985) are viable adaptations and compliments to what is currently offered.

SUMMARY

"Niches" is an important contribution to the effort to bring together rural education and rural economic development for productive mutual benefit. I find it most useful from the standpoint of bringing together a considerable amount of information about who and where we are, and using it to identify some promising directions and areas to explore. The author's perspective is one of optimism based on existing and potential rural resources.

While the paper clearly aids in 'learning to find the niches' it does considerably less with teaching what the niches are. From my own standpoint I am interested in a more detailed discussion of the promising practices, approaches, projects, and programs that currently contribute to rural revitalizations. I am at least as interested in the application of the information Hobbs has brought together for other productive marriage possibilities.

I have little additional to offer in terms of 'niche identification', but would like to strongly suggest that a needed component for revitalization is the development of entrepreneurial and progressive thinking leadership in rural schools. As discussed, current school environments are less than conducive to developing the skills required of entrepreneurship, self-employment, and small business management. Community businesses that have successfully embraced the practices of democratic management, team problem solving, community networking, and role diversification of its employees can assist and advise school systems with organizational restructuring.

"Niches" provides a foundation for a continuing discussion and inventory of ideas that work. Rural schools and communities need to work from a clear and comprehensive understanding of the local context because of the enormous diversity and richness of rural communities.

Hobbs underscores the importance of the 'opportunity structure' perspective. If rural educators began to view community economic development as part of their mission, and the schools as resources to work toward that end, more 'productive unions' will result to the benefit of all.

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EFFECTIVE RURAL SCHOOLS

WHERE ARE WE? WHERE ARE WE GOING? HOW DO WE GET THERE?

Weldon Beckner
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Prepared for the National Rural Education Research Forum
Lake Placid, New York
October 16-17, 1987

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ABSTRACT

"Effective Schools" and "Effective Schools Research" are the currently popular terms among those interested in improving schools and improving the educational accomplishments of our young people. However, the terms are fuzzy and subject to many interpretations. This paper explores the application of various concepts typically included under these terms, summarizing the "state of the art" and discussing how what we now know with relative certainty about what makes schools effective can be better applied in our schools. The question of "How do we get from where we are to where we want to be?" is answered by presenting the best information now available about successful change processes as applied to renorming schools in accordance with the best research about good education.

Psychological principles and philosophical premises are used to support a summary of effective school characteristics. Change process principles and a proven model for change are discussed to show how our schools can be remade according to what we now know is characteristic of the best schools.

The terms "Effective Schools" and "Effective Schools Research" have become the most recent in a long line of educational bywords and cliches. They are used by so many people with differing concepts of what good schools are and what schools are supposed to accomplish that to define the terms is an exercise in frustration. The terms currently mean whatever the user decides they mean. So, let's just agree to explore what current research and experience in the field of education seem to tell us about good schools and how we can best pursue the goal of being sure that students learn what we want them to learn.

WHAT ARE SCHOOLS FOR?

This somewhat ungrammatical question forms the foundation for our thinking about what schools should accomplish. Each person concerned with the question would answer it somewhat differently. The critical point is that, whatever our concept of "what schools are for" may be, there are certain practices and procedures which will best accomplish the desired purposes.

There is little evidence available at this time to indicate that principles for achieving desired outcomes are significantly different for rural schools than for other schools. The following discussion will, therefore, usually apply to schools in almost any setting or situation. Many of the principles and practices are easier to apply in a rural school, however, because of shorter lines of communication, less "red tape," and closer relationships among faculty and students.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

Without getting unnecessarily deep into the subject, it seems appropriate to explore the psychological principles upon which our knowledge about good schools is built. We now have good evidence to support some bedrock assumptions about how people learn (both young and old), and from these assumptions we can pursue a logical path to determine desirable school practices and needs for change.

We owe to Benjamin Bloom (1976), his students, and colleagues much credit for carrying out seminal studies and then summarizing the research on good schools. The discussion which follows is based on his writing.

Not so many years ago (and sadly still prominent among many so-called educators today) the prevailing belief was that "there are good learners and there are poor learners." We must, therefore, make adjustments in what we do in school to best accommodate this "fact." Good learners can learn the more to learning ability, rate of learning, and motivation for further learning." You don't have to be an esoteric researcher to reach these conclusions. Just observe evidence readily available in most of the classrooms of the world.

COGNITIVE ENTRY BEHAVIORS

Bloom (1976) and his colleagues have estimated " . . . that cognitive entry behavior can account for up to one-half of the variance on relevant cognitive achievement measures over subsequent learning task(s)." In other words, this means that about half of what determines whether or not students learn what we want them to learn depends on whether or not they have the necessary knowledge and cognitive skill when we start teaching the new material. This "readiness" refers to both SPECIFIC cognitive behaviors (knowledge) and more GENERAL cognitive entry behaviors such as verbal ability, reading comprehension, and learning styles.

AFFECTIVE ENTRY BEHAVIORS

Research evidence indicates that " . . . affective entry characteristics can account for up to one-fourth of the variance on relevant cognitive achievement measures." The student enters complex and abstract ideas, but poor learners can learn only the simple and concrete. To help us divide students into proper categories for teaching, we devised I.Q. tests, ability grouping, tracking programs, etc. Most of our schools still follow practices based on this construct about learners.

About thirty years ago, there began to develop a body of research that said "there are faster learners and there are slower learners." We then began to develop ways to give the slower learners the extra time they needed to reach the learning objectives deemed important. This was an important advancement in the science of learning and pedagogy, but we now have additional evidence that supports a more revolutionary construct about teaching and learning, one that says "...most students become very similar with regard to learning ability, rate of learning, and motivation for further learning--when provided with favorable learning conditions."

There is less evidence to support the last statement, but even if we are not ready to wholly embrace such a revolutionary assumption we must admit that at least to a large degree it is probably true. There is good evidence that, to state it in negative terms, "when students are provided with unfavorable learning conditions, they become even more dissimilar with regard each new learning task with a concept about the material to be learned (positive, negative, or somewhere in between) and about his ability to learn that material. These concepts have been developed over a period of time and as a result of previous related experiences.

QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION

The conclusions stated above indicate that, in determining what they will learn, the characteristics of students at the beginning of a series of learning tasks are much more important than the quality of instruction. These characteristics are both cognitive and affective, the two accounting for about 75% of the differences in learning outcomes among students. Quality of instruction appears to account for only about one-fourth of the variance in learning. This means that the quality of instruction has little chance of overcoming the effect of cognitive and affective entry behaviors unless the instruction is directly related to the cognitive and/or affective deficiencies.

PHILOSOPHICAL PREMISES

If one follows the above and related principles about how we may achieve the purposes of our schools, there are certain philosophical premises which we must logically observe. The following seem to be the most obvious.

1. Almost all students are capable of achieving excellence in learning the essentials of formal schooling, and all students are expected to perform at high levels of learning.
2. Instructional assignments should be made directly, based on continuous assessment of student learning, while being sure that each student is ready, both cognitively and affectively, before beginning a new learning task.
3. Success influences self-concept; self-concept influences learning and behavior.
4. The instructional process can be changed to improve learning.
5. Staff and students both take responsibility for successful learning outcomes.
6. Time for learning should be varied according to the needs of each student and the complexity of the task.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

There are numerous compilations of characteristics which seem to be somewhat common among the schools designated as "effective," or what we might just call good schools. A recent listing by Cruickshank (1986) seems to be adequate and understandable.

LEADERSHIP DIMENSIONS:

- Core Elements
  - Positive climate and overall atmosphere
  - Goal-focused activities toward clear, attainable and relevant objectives
  - Teacher-directed classroom management and decision making
  - In-service staff training for effective teaching
- Facilitating Elements
  - Shared consensus on values and goals
  - Long-range planning and coordination
  - Stability and continuity of key staff
  - District-level support for school improvement

EFFICACY DIMENSIONS:

- Core Elements
  - High and positive achievement expectations with a constant press for excellence
  - Visible rewards for academic excellence and growth
  - Cooperative activity and group interaction in the classroom
  - Total staff involvement with school improvement
  - Autonomy and flexibility to implement adaptive practices
  - Appropriate levels of difficulty for learning tasks
  - Teacher empathy, rapport, and personal interaction with students
- Facilitating Elements
  - Emphasis on homework and study

- Positive accountability; acceptance of responsibility for learning outcomes
- Strategies to avoid nonpromotion of students
- Deemphasis of strict ability grouping; interaction with more accomplished peers

EFFICIENCY DIMENSIONS;

Core Elements
- Effective use of instructional time; amount and intensity of engagement in school learning
- Orderly and disciplined school and classroom environments
- Continuous diagnosis, evaluation, and feedback
- Well-structured classroom activities
- Instruction guided by content coverage
- Schoolwide emphasis on basic and higher order skills

Facilitating Elements
- Opportunities for individualized work
- Number and variety of opportunities to learn

CHANGING (RENORMING) SCHOOLS

As indicated above, there is now available enough research and history of successful practice to provide adequate information about what schools should be like. Good information about how to move from "where we are to where we want to be" is much less available. The remainder of this paper will focus on the information now available about how to bring about significant change in a school or school district. Most of this information is available in the form of experience documentation and descriptive studies. Little has been done to document more emperically what works best when a school leader with vision decides to change "what is" to "what should be."

PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE CHANGE PROCESS

Much as been said and written about the best way to go about changing schools. This has developed over time, as we have moved from "scientific management" concepts about organization and organizational change to more modern approaches. Recent publications from the business world and the popular press have emphasized principles which have been around for some time but seldom followed.

Rowan C. Stutz, at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory provided a good comparison of the "model" concepts of the fifties with more effective ideas which he incorporated into what he called the "Rural Futures Development Process." This seems to be a good source for comparing traditional change process concepts with those now found to be more effective, especially since they were developed in the context of rural education needs. He summarized his conclusions as follows.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MODEL INNOVATIVE PROCESS:	CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RURAL FUTURES DEVELOPMENT PROCESS:
(as identified by Michael Fullan, 1971, and reported by Stutz, 1974)	
1. Innovations are developed externally and transmitted to schools on a relatively universal basis.	1. Learners, parents, and teachers have enough understanding of curriculum design, organizational development and instructional methods that they can make wise choices regarding the creative development of new programs utilizing components of a wide variety of alternatives.
2. Users of innovations (parents, teachers, students) have had limited roles in the educational change process, and generally are seen as passive adopters of the best of recent innovations.	2. Users (citizens, educators, students) are in control of the innovative process in their own schools and participate in selecting and/or creating the innovations to be used in working out the implementation problems.
3. Primacy is given to innovations which often become the ends of the change process rather than the means for achieving desired outcomes.	3. Primacy is given to outcomes and user capacities to innovate. Innovations are viewed as means to accomplishing desired outcomes.
4. Change is initiated from the outside and schools are viewed as a part of the universe of adopters.	4. Schools and their communities are viewed as initiators of change and as selective, creative, deliberative users of the products of research and development.

5. Educational reforms are often individualistic as a result of permissive process.	5. Educational reforms are pervasive--a result of participative process.
6. Values and goals as articulated by the users have no direct influence in the process.	6. Users' values and goals provide much of the input to the process and directly influence decisions made about innovating.
7. Diversity of innovations is not allowed.	7. RFD assumes wide diversity in goals and legitimizes diversity of alternatives. It recognizes that different communities and schools may have different objectives and priorities at any given point in time.
8. The force of the innovative process is from the top down.	8. The force of the innovative process is from the bottom up. The role of the top-down relationship is to facilitate the bottom-up innovative process.
9. Role changes in user systems, which are theoretically part and parcel of intended consequences of most educational innovations, are not recognized and planned for.	9. Changes in roles and role relationships are part and parcel of the implementation process.
10. Little awareness exists that innovations require unlearning and relearning, and create uncertainty and a concern about competencies to perform new roles.	10. RFD recognizes that virtually every significant change has implications for changes in roles and role relationships. These changes, and the opportunity, resources and atmosphere for acquiring needed

	new competencies, are integral components of the implementation process.
11. New educational ideas and organizational changes often, through lack of user involvement, become empty alternatives because they create unrealistic conditions and expectations for teacher, administrator, parent and/or student performance.	11. Users participate in deciding what changes are to be made and in deciding what is needed to successfully implement them. Thus, new performance expectations are more likely to be realistic and planned changes are more likely to occur.
12. Those affected by the change are dependent upon the process.	12. Use of the process is dependent upon those affected by the changes.

Another view of how change may be most successfully attempted has been provided by John Champlin, former superintendent of schools in Johnson City, N. Y., and now Professor of Educational Administration at Texas Tech University. His success in leading the Johnson City Schools in achieving unusual advances in test score data and other indicators of effective school operation earned him national recognition while he was superintendent, and he has been involved extensively in working with districts and states around the nation in helping them achieve similar results in school reform.

Champlin (1987) states that managing change successfully is a controlled process consisting of seven critical change factors, all of which relate to the prime assumption that "any intervention or alteration will have eventual if not immediate total organizational impact." The seven critical change factors he identifies are as follows.

(1) ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH, including the way individuals and the organization interact together. This concept is often discussed within the concept of "school climate."

(2) GOAL CLARITY, to guide all efforts and give a basis for assessment and renewal.

(3) UTILIZATION OF A PROCESS, consisting of four phases which are preceeded by three prerequisites. The prerequisites are organizational health, goal clarity and evidence of effective leader behavior. Phase I deals with general readiness issues, Phase II develops pre-entry skills, Phase III gets the program in operation, and Phase IV is for evaluation and renewal.

(4) PRESENCE OF A CHANGE AGENT, to serve as a catalyst, source of solutions, and process assistant and to alter the existing equilibrium.

(5) RE-EDUCATION AND RE-NORMING THE COMMUNITY, primarily through small group meetings involving at least 90% of the

parents. These meetings should be conducted by teachers, not administrators.

(6) EFFECTIVE LEADER BEHAVIOR, fulfilling the roles of gate-keeper, supporter, encourager and enabler.

(7) RENEWAL, to keep the process ongoing.

Champlin (1987) further points out that successful change must:

(1) Be driven by data from research and the local district, leading to a purging of ineffective practices;

(2) Be committed to being goal driven, doing everything according to desired goals;

(3) Be committed to renewal, always correcting and adjusting;

(4) Use the available knowledge on change and behavioral management to plan and control every move;

(5) Develop an intolerance for mediocrity, both personally and organizationally;

(6) train staff members in every skill they are asked to perform and encourage their creativity in using the skills;

(7) Win the community as an ally by working with them and giving them reason to support the effort;

(8) Win staff support by creating a strong sense of need, ownership, and commitment;

(9) Never rest, but renew;

(10) Never lose sight of the ultimate goal.

A MODEL FOR CHANGE

To carry out desired change requires that some plan or model be followed which is consistent with the principles outlined above. This will vary for each situation according to local conditions and preferences, but there are some vital elements which much be included if the plan is to be effective. Again drawing from Champlin (1986) and his colleagues, the following brief discussion will identify the basic components of a good model for change. They use the term "Outcomes Driven Developmental Model" in referring to this comprehensive plan for change. It includes:

(1) Designation of desired student exit behaviors: from the literature on effective schools one would select behaviors such as self-esteem as a learner and as a person; desired cognitive learning, both lower and higher levels; acquisition of process skills, such as problem solving, communication, decision making, accountability, and group process; being a self-directed learner; and concern for others.

(2) Acceptance of the basic mission statement that "All students will learn well what schools want them to learn."

(3) Development among the staff and community understanding and acceptance of the psychological and philosophical bases for the model, as discussed in the first part of this paper.

(4) The existence of transformational leadership.

(5) Development and/or change in administrative support systems, including staff development, a communications network in the school and the community, a problem-solving model to follow, adherence to appropriate change process concepts, climate improvement, and resource management.

(6) Development and/or change in board of education policies, support, and relationships with the community; and networking with other boards attempting similar reforms.

(7) Development and/or change in school support systems, including instructional processes, curriculum organization, intentional school practices (discipline, grading, class scheduling, etc.), intentional classroom practices to produce "mastery" (teaching methods, lesson cycle, grading practices, disciplinary practices, etc.), and various organizational structures and practices.

SOME SPECIFIC CONCERNS

A thorough discussion of the specific kinds of implications for implementing the principles and model for change discussed above would make this paper much too long, but a brief exploration of some of the more obvious and important items seems appropriate. Many of the changes called for are rather simple and probably not particularly controversial. Others are more revolutionary and likely to precipitate considerable controversy and resistance among both the faculty and the community, primarily because of the timeless excuse that "we haven't done it that way before," or "we don't do things that way here."

The basic mission statement, "All students will learn well what schools want them to learn," means that we no longer accept the notion that certain students are not capable of learning what we want them to learn. We may not achieve the mission all of the time, but we should not accept excuses related to home background, ethnic or religious background, or even many disabilities. The common educational statement that we will provide "equal opportunity" is not enough. We must commit to providing EQUAL LEARNING.

An extremely important, and seldom adequately addressed, part of successful renorming of a school is climate. By this is meant developing an atmosphere of mutual respect, safety, and comfort that facilitates the free exchange of ideas, differences, and preferences, combined with a dedication to school improvement, needed change, and maximum effort. If the school climate is not right there will not be successful school reform.

Staff development must follow a model that emphasizes control of the effort by teachers, according to needs recognized as important to implementation of the stated goals and objectives. Much of this will be directly related to classroom teaching and curriculum organization, and it will be specific to the needs of the various types of teachers. One shot "dog-and-pony shows" to fill the time allotted for "in-service" will not suffice.

An effective communications network will be designed to function horizontally as much as vertically, so that teachers and administrators may exchange ideas and assistance with as little logistical interference as possible. It will also keep the community informed and encourage input from parents and others, even students.

Practices within the "school support systems" area include many of the areas requiring revolutionary change to achieve the mission of an effective school. Instructional processes, curriculum organization, intentional school practices, intentional classroom practices, and organizational structures must all undergo radical revision. A few examples will illustrate the many changes required.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESS changes follow "mastery" models of the teaching cycle and lesson planning which have been widely promoted in recent years. They include concepts of task analysis, lesson planning, statement of objectives, focus and mental set, input, guided practice, cues and correctives, formative assessment, enrichment, reteaching, closure, and summative assessment. Specific terms and variations on the theme may change the way these ideas are followed, but most of the basic ideas are similar. Much progress has been made in improving the act of teaching through use of these models, but without significant necessary revision of other parts of the educational system instructional procedures will not change significantly. What is being termed a "holistic" approach must be followed which incorporates all of the related practices and concepts. The term "mastery learning" has been widely used in referring to these kinds of reform, although the term also includes some aspects of curriculum organization, school practice, and classroom practice.

CURRICULUM ORGANIZATION must also be dedicated to helping achieve needed school reform. Subject-matter divisions must be minimized and an organization developed which will facilitate the continuous progress of students through the curriculum.

Organization will tend to be by rather short units, learning tasks, and lessons, with very specific objectives and indicators of successful attainment for each one. Organization according to traditional grade levels will be largely abandoned, but alignment of one unit or learning task with the next must be carefully maintained.

INTENTIONAL SCHOOL PRACTICES which require careful attention and drastic revision in most schools include the critical practices of placement, movement, and certification. "Individualized instruction" is not necessary, but students are taught in groups which have achieved comparable levels of learning. These groups typically stay together for the most part, although students may be moved in and out according to their individual progress. This placement in small groups is a vital part of the process.

Movement through the curriculum continuum must be carefully monitored and controlled to assure mastery of one task or concept before a student attempts to move on to the next one. This movement is controlled by "certifying" that a student has reached the required level of learning or skill before being allowed to progress to the next unit, task, or lesson. Mastery at the 80%

level is a common requirement, although it may be lower or higher.

The continuous progress practices are usually directed primarily at the basic skills of reading, mathematics, and language arts. For the other subject areas and school activities students usually stay with their chronological age group.

"Time on task" has received much attention by those interested in school reform, and it plays an important part in improving student learning. Eliminating unnecessary class interruptions and student distractions deserves a lot of attention. However, it has been shown that moving to mastery and continuous progress practices can in itself increase time on task from about 50% to about 80%.

INTENTIONAL CLASSROOM PRACTICES which usually require radical change include those having to do with school marks (grading), motivation, use of tests, discipline, expectations, and the like. Grades become a measure of power, and no student receives a failing grade. Incompletes are used to show that a student has not yet reached the required level of mastery. Positive forms of motivation (success, encouragement) are used rather than threats of failure and punishment, thus eliminating most traditional forms of discipline and student control. High expectations for all students requires doing away with the idea that some students "just can't learn." Formative assessments (tests) are used to determine progress, diagnose needs, and plan remediation, and they are not "averaged" with the summative evaluations to determine grades. Homework is part of the learning process and not used for grade determination. Assessments are not confined to "hard data" such as test scores; teacher judgement is equally acceptable.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES which require revision include some of the things discussed above, such as grade level designations. They also include provision for encouraging team teaching, various continuous progress organizational schemes, and elimination of "promotion" and "failure."

THE VALUE OF COLLABORATION

"Going it alone" is a lonely and difficult task when attempts are made to reform schools. Consequently, it is becoming more and more evident that there is great benefit in two or more school districts working together as they follow a common path toward renorming their schools. The benefits are many, including mutual support and encouragement, cross-fertilization of ideas and experiences, stronger defense against attackers, and combining of resources (both financial and human) to support the cooperative effort. This "partnership" concept is proving to be most beneficial for rural school districts, in particular, and much more use of the idea seems likely in the future.

IN CONCLUSION

The times are both exciting and challenging for educators and educational leaders. There are difficulties, but there are tremendous possibilities, and if we will use the knowledge we now have about teaching and learning to remake our schools we can look forward to a most exciting and rewarding professional life. The alternative, staying with the mediocre and unfulfilling system now found in most parts of the country, is surely not what those who claim to be professional educators will tolerate any longer.

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REACTION TO PAPER BY WELDON BECKNER

EFFECTIVE RURAL SCHOOLS:

WHERE ARE WE? WHERE ARE WE GOING? HOW DO WE GET THERE?

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Prepared for the National Rural Education Research Forum
Lake Placid, New York
October 16-17, 1987

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ABSTRACT

Effective rural schools is a phenomenon which is complex and difficult to establish. In his paper titled: Effective Rural Schools, Where are we? Where are we going? How do we get there?, Weldon Beckner provides a perspective on this topic. His paper suggested five critical issues associated with defining, studying, and developing effective or successful rural schools. The issues generated include; (1) effective schools literature and application to rural schools, (2) view of rurality and implications for rural schools, (3) unit of analysis for implementing educational change, (4) conceptual orientation for the process of change, and (5) documentation of claims. In this reactor paper each issue is fully explicated and a general view on each is presented. The reactor paper broadens and cites a range of literature not noted in the Beckner paper which complements the impressions reported by Beckner. The paper concludes with the suggestion for examining a wider net of relevant research and to continue the search for implementing "best practices" within the rural school and community context.

1.0 Introduction

In conducting a critical review of the paper written by Welden Beckner of Texas Tech University titled: "Effective Rural Schools: Where are we?, Where are we going? and How do we get there?," five broad issues emerged. The issues suggested are; (1) effective schools literature and application to rural schools, (2) view of rurality and implications for rural schools, (3) unit of analysis for implementing educational change, (4) conceptual orientation for the process of change, and (5) documentation of claims.

As per the suggested format for this reactor paper, each issue is elaborated upon in some detail followed by a position concerning the issue under discussion. Through out this review, this reviewer is mindful of the complexity of the above issues and various legitimate viewpoints which are often diametrical in nature. The opinions expressed in this paper are in no way critical of the author and his views concerning effective rural schools. Rather, this critique attempts to expand upon the information presented and to suggest a broader perspective on improving rural schools.

2.0 Issues

The order in which the issues are presented are not necessarily in priority order. The initial discussion addresses the major theme of the forum paper concerning effective rural schools. A notion which owes much of its orientation to the so called effective schools movement in United States stemming from the research of Edmunds and Frederickson (1978) and Brookover and

Lezotte (1977). In addition, the research of Goodlad (1983) and Wynne (1980) provide an additional perspective to understanding the nature of effective schools. An analysis of school effectiveness is further complicated and enriched by the research of effective teaching of Berlinger and Rosenshine (1976), Brophy and Everton (1974), and Good and Grouws (1975). In any regard, this topic has many layers and overlapping interests (Carlson and Ducharme, 1987) which somehow need to be sorted through and placed in the context of rural education.

The second issue addresses various dimensions of rurality and rural education and its contributions to understanding the unique qualities of rural schools. The third and fourth issues introduce the debate over what Fullan (1982) refers to as the "changing" process and the appropriate level at which the change effort should be targeted. Finally, the issue of documentation of evidence, as exemplified in the Beckner paper, is explored.

2.1 Effective Schools Research and Rural Schools

A recent article titled: "Effective Schools Research: Will it Play in the Country?" (Buttram & Carlson, 1983) explored various dimensions of the Effective Schools Research and its implications for rural schools, particularly in Vermont. The article argues that there are some characteristics of effective schools which do not have direct application (e.g., safe and orderly environment), or need modification (e.g., instructional leadership), or are directly relevant (e.g., high expectations for student achievement, time on task, and frequent monitoring of student progress), and/or are more fully applicable to rural settings (e.g., school-community relations). Each of these characteristics offers a point of departure for eventual improvement rural schools. In other words, even though much of the Effective Schools Research was conducted with urban elementary schools there is merit in examining these concepts within the context of rural schools. As one rural teacher stated it, "what is more practical than the importance of the acquisition and mastery of basic skills, be it in rural or urban schools?". On the other hand, these concepts are very broad in nature to permit and require more careful analysis in applied settings such as rural schools. The conclusion drawn in the Buttram and Carlson article, which is still relevant, is that the Effective Schools Research provides a research-based framework, albeit primarily correlational and retrospective case studies, in which the dialogue for improvement can be structured and pursued. Therefore, the issue revolves around the question of how relevant are specific findings of this body of literature and its applications to the improvement of rural education and specifically rural schools.

REACTION

First, there seems to be some confusion over terminology. As Beckner states early in his paper, "the terms (Effective Schools and Effective Schools Research) are fuzzy and subject to many interpretations." (p. 2) He then argues that this confusion can be minimized by discussing "good schools and how we can best pursue the goal of being sure that students learn what we want them to learn." (p. 3) This enlarges the net for capturing pertinent literature including the works previously outlined and compounds the confusion rather than reduces it. For good or evil, the substitution of terminology and related definitions still leaves concerned persons with the enormous task of sifting relevant research, culling out usable concepts, and defining at the local level what it means to have an "effective," "good," or "successful" school. This is not to suggest that this task is done in a vacuum or with no regard to state-level policies, but in the final analysis the meaning which local persons place on their school will determine what people come to believe concerning how well it is or should be operating. The Effective Schools Research represented primarily by the work of Edmunds and his associates provide an excellent point of departure.

Second, the summary of Effective Schools literature quoted from Cruickshank (1986) is offered as a synthesis which should be "adequate and understandable." (p. 9) Adequate, maybe, and understandable, not very much. The dimensions of leadership, efficacy, and efficiency with core and facilitating elements for each used by Cruickshank is a logical set of categories but which can not stand on their own. That is, a considerable amount of definition and explanation is needed before these concepts provide sufficient guidance for the analysis of school performance. Beckner provides the bones but not the flesh necessary to appreciate Cruickshank's conceptual framework.

Further, in Beckner's review there is no mention of one of the critical and probably most controversial aspects of the Effective Schools movement that being the issue of equity. In fact, Beckner gives but passing attention to this area of concern when he explores briefly the notions of "equal opportunity" and "EQUAL LEARNING." (p.19) There is little doubt that the notion of equity is a very complex social and philosophical matter and yet any discussion of effectiveness is not served well without the exploration of this topic and its relevance to making schools better. Three readings not referenced in Beckner's paper but offer some perspectives on this topic include Oakes (1985), Edmunds (1979), and Persell (1977).

Clearly there are no quick and easy ways for examining and developing better schools. This includes the examination of pertinent literature which can aid practitioners in search of guiding principles and strategies. And yet, in spite of the various limitations of the Effective Schools Research, so well documented by others (Purkey & Smith, 1983; Mackenzie, 1983; Ralph & Fennessey, 1983; and Firestone & Herriott, 1982), has a body of literature exercised such a significant counter force to the dismal views of Coleman et al. (1966) and Jencks et al. (1972). The supposition that schools can not make a difference and by association neither can teachers and administrators has been put to rest. This is the message of the Effective Schools Research and should not be lost in trying to sort out volumes of research and related findings.

1.2 Rurality and Rural Education

The second issue which Beckner's paper brings to mind is the endless debate over the concepts of rurality and rural education. There are those who argue that no longer are there major differences between rural and urban settings. Others, possibly from positions of nostalgia and/or personal experiences, feel there are significant differences. In any regard, it seems another look, albeit brief, is worthy of consideration. The issue is whether a rural environment and its school(s) present special conditions which policy makers and practitioners need to consider in the pursuit of school improvement.

REACTION

It appears this issue will not be laid to rest by resorting to a quantitative measures (e.g., number of inhabitants, distance from a metropolitan area, size of school) without the engagement of qualitative aspects (e.g., sense of isolation, a fishbowl environment, conservative culture). Schmidt (1982) discusses the notion of countryside along the broad dimensions of topography, population distribution, political structure, cultural enclaves, and economic structure. Schmidt's concern is that the rural or countryside perspective held by many is filled with stereotypes and is homogeneous in nature. He argues, "...our countryside is extremely diverse." He goes on to argue that we should recognize this diversity and should welcome it as a valuable resource, "a strength to be cultivated." (p. 11) The point is, although we have not found a simple, straight forward definition of rurality, a search for understanding of its unique features is still needed.

Rural sociologists continue this search and a body of literature provides a summary of studies which supports some claims of rural differences. Dillman & Hobbs (1982), Coward and Smith (1984), Coward et al. (undated) provide a sampling of current literature which educators may find of some interest in understanding the rural milieu and its impact on human service operations including schools. In fact, Coward et al. (undated) provide an excellent summary of rural features which impinge on mental health practice and which conceptually relate to rural schools. Some general findings include greater poverty (e.g., one in six persons below the poverty line versus one in nine persons in metropolitan areas), higher dependency ratio (e.g., greater percentages of younger and older citizens), professional isolation, thinner services requiring more generalists and resulting in greater incidence of burnout, a sense of living apart or sparseness, and finally the existence of natural helping networks. Each feature and various combinations set rural environments apart from their urban counterparts.

The conceptual lens on rurality can be shifted and focused more directly upon the schools embedded in this diverse and somewhat unique environment. Nachtigal (1982) leads the way in providing a look at diverse rural school and community improvement efforts and the special features of each. His linkage of these efforts to varying community types (e.g., rural poor, traditional middle America, and communities in transition) helps in understanding the interrelatedness of community and school in an improvement process. DeYoung (1987) furthers documents numerous studies that establishes the closeness of rural community life to its school. As he states,

> ...the significance and importance of the rural school in American community life, and the shifting occupational circumstances of its tenders, have been well recognized and research by sociologist and historians for decades, but have only recently surfaced among educational researchers typically unfamiliar with the legacy of the issues involved. (p. 128)

To some degree it is understandable that this literature was not widely reviewed by Beckner, given its breadth and diversity. On the other hand, it seems highly relevant to the topic at hand and should be given consideration by persons serious about building effective schools in rural communities.

1.3 Unit of Analysis for Implementing Educational Change

There is a general bias in educational circles which places considerable attention on the individual (e.g., the child, the teacher, the administrator, etc.) and tends to overlook the dynamics of the school or classroom as an organization. Beckner's paper further reinforces this orientation by stressing psychological principles of Bloom and others in examining the performance of schools. Later in his paper he does quote the work of Champlin (1986) as a broader model for change. However, it provides a list of ingredients which represents parts of a "comprehensive plan for change" but is fuzzy concerning the targets for change or the over arching theory which blends these parts into a holistic strategy.

REACTION

There is inherent wisdom in the golfer's lament, "Keep your eye on the ball." The ball in the case of schools is the child and few would argue against the need or value of closely monitoring their performance. However, student progress is so highly entwined with other factors not the least of which includes the needs of his or her teacher, the curriculum materials, the resources of the time and expertise, the relationships among other personnel, etc. In other words, the child exists in an organization made of a number of interrelated parts which can influence his or her opportunities to learn. Rural school change advocates, who are interested in constructing more productive school environments, need to unsnarl a mix of influences upon pupil, teacher, and administrator performance. It seems as though attention needs to be divided between the parts (e.g., the child, etc.) and the whole (e.g., school organization and community) in order to successfully attain rural school improvement.

Deal's (1987) definition of an effective school supports this perspective. He states,

> ...an effective school is one where: (a) individual needs are acknowledged and met, (b) a well-coordinated

> system of roles and relationships supports goal-directed instructional activities, (c) different interests and perspectives have been negotiated into a commonly accepted pact among contending subgroups, and (d) shared symbols and ceremonies create meaning and a sense of collective identity for those inside the schools--as well as for important constituencies in the environment. (p. 238)

This definition takes into consideration several dimensions of an organization including the dominant orientation of most educators, often referred to as the human resource perspective (e.g., meeting the needs of individuals, particularly the child). In addition, this definition begins to account for other perspectives including the structural (e.g., roles and relationships), the political (e.g., negotiated interests of subgroups), and the symbolic (e.g., shared symbols, ceremonies and related beliefs). This holistic framework provides a theoretical foundation for recognizing various and significant parts of a rural school and its community. It challenges the solutions and remedies often proffered which do not account for this larger view and as a result, give only temporary relief from the problems faced by a rural school and community.

The works of Schein (1986, 1985), Frost et al. (1985), and Bolman and Deal (1984) provide a rich and fresh theoretical base for understanding the more subtle aspects of organizations. Carlson and Matthes (1987) and Carlson (1986) report current applications of this organizational literature to understanding the development of successful rural schools. Early findings suggest that the future of affecting change in rural schools may be well served by taking a broader view of the school and to examine more carefully its hidden sides of political and cultural activities.

1.4 Conceptual Orientation for the Process of Change

Beckner treats us to a number of principles of change which on the surface seem common sensical and worthy. He indicates the importance of school climate, staff development, effective communications, and effective leadership. In addition, he calls for "radical revision" of instructional processes, curriculum organization, intentional school and classroom practices, and organizational structures. Considerable attention is devoted to the "what" of school change but minimal attention is devoted to "how." Each of these phenomenon are worthy in of themselves but what is lacking is a more thorough explication of how to bring about their implementation. Beckner does not fully answer his third question, "How do we get there?."

REACTION

The issue here is how does a school system wishing to embark on an improvement process go about this task. In other words, are there developmental stages or phases which can help guide local leadership in bringing about successful change? Clearly there are no algorithms which will guarantee desired results. On the other hand, the research of Crandall et al. (1982), Huberman and Miles (1982), Fullan (1982, 1985), Rosenblum and Louis (1979) does suggest the existence of a developmental flow which successful change efforts tend to follow. The number of stages and respective labels will differ somewhat depending on the source used. Essentially the stages reported include the concepts of readiness, initiation, implementation, and continuation. These stages are highly interrelated and dynamic in nature. Thus, they need to be viewed as developmentally interdependent and various aspects are recycled throughout the process. In any regard, there is extensive documentation of the process of school level change which goes beyond a listing of principles and offers insight how the process is sustained over time (Loucks-Horsley & Hergert, 1985).

2.5 Documentation of Claims

A critique of a paper would not be complete without a thorough examination of the author's citations and its application to issues and arguments raised in the text. An important issue when there is a desire to persuade policy makers and practitioners to reconsider current policies and practices. In other words, careful use of sources and their quality are important considerations in judging the potential value of the ideas being promulgated.

REACTION

The issue here is not the appropriateness of the related references but rather how they were or were not used to support the various claims presented in the Beckner paper. For example, midway in the paper is a discussion of principles of effective change process in which a contrast is made of Fullan's and Stutz's characteristics of change. Neither work is cited and nor does the content reflect the latest work of Fullan concerning the implementation process. There is, however, a reference to a later piece of work by Fullan (1985) but no citation in the text to indicate how this article was used. A number of references are listed to which no direct reference is made in the body of paper. It may be a question of style but it seems the reader would benefit from knowing more explicitly how these various works influenced the author's point of view.

The other side of this documentation issue is the number of strong claims made which were not buttressed by supportive evidence. The following quotes illustrate this point:

"Recent publications from the business world and the popular press have emphasized principles which have been around for some time but seldom followed." (p. 11)

"(5) RE-EDUCATION AND RE-NORMING THE COMMUNITY, primarily through small group meetings involving at least 90% of the parents. These meetings should be conducted by teachers, not administrators." (pp. 15-16)

"If the school climate is not right there will not be successful school reform." (p. 20)

"Instructional processes, curriculum organization, intentional school practices, intentional classroom practices, and organizational structures must all undergo radical revision."

(p. 20)

"However, it has been shown that moving to mastery and continuous progress practices can in itself increase time on task from about 50% to about 80%." (p. 23)

"This 'partnership' concept is proving to be most beneficial for rural school districts, in particular, and much more use of the idea seems likely in the future." (p. 25) (Underlines added.)

The issue is not whether these claims can be supported but rather the importance of citing specific references for these claims which will allow verification or a cross check on the posited inferences. It seems a paper being delivered at a research forum is under greater scrutiny and pressure to support its claims. This latter issue may be a bit picky and insensitive to the pressure under which the author wrote this paper. If, however, the practices of rural schools are to be influenced there is a need to carefully document the sources from which potentially valuable ideas are derived.

3.0 Summary

In part Beckner's paper provides a context for examining prevailing issues facing rural school and community development. He has cited a sampling of school improvement literature and provides partial answers to where are we?, where we are going?, and how do get there?.

His treatment of both psychological principles (e.g., particularly the work of Bloom and literature related to mastery learning) and change principles (e.g., Champlin and the Johnson

City approach) are informative. A strong sense of concern for individuals, particularly the student, comes through his presentation. Criticism of current practices, such as the "one shot dog and pony shows" for staff development, although not well documented, does seem warranted. His call for collaboration among rural school districts is thoughtful and worthy of further development (Crohn & Nelson, 1986). For example, in the State of Vermont, there are a number of formal and informal attempts to establish consortia to assist school district efforts at school based improvement.

This critique attempts to take some of the answers provided by Beckner and expand upon them from various perspectives. Five issues were raised which have to do with how rural school change can be conceptualized and how current educational research may enhance these efforts at improvement. Although criticism has been leveled at the breadth of Beckner's suggestions, it does not dispute a need to continue a search for better ways of understanding the rural experience. It is hoped that the Beckner's paper plus its critiques will provide a fuller picture of what it means to create effective rural schools.

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Professor Carlson currently serves as a full professor in educational administration and planning and is director of the Ed. D. program in educational administration. He earned his Ed. D. at the University of Rochester and worked at the University of Iowa before coming to University of Vermont. In addition to his teaching responsibilities in systems theory and applications, his research interests include the application of organizational theory to organizational improvement and the exploration of related methodologies. Recent publications include an extensive book of readings on school improvement and articles on rural education applications. He is presently examining the utility of organizational culture to enabling organizational change including rural schools. Dr. Carlson's consulting activities include a range of educational organizations from elementary to higher education institutions, Vermont State Department of Education, and nonprofit social services agengies.

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REACTION TO PAPER BY WELDON BECKNER:

EFFECTIVE RURAL SCHOOLS:

WHERE ARE WE? WHERE ARE WE GOING? HOW DO WE GET THERE?

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Prepared for the National Rural Education Research Forum
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ABSTRACT

There are five troubling assumptions addressed in this reactor paper, assumptions related to (1) the applicability of the effective schools research to small rural schools, (2) the question of "what schools are for, (3) the advocacy of the "mastery learning" model for all teaching/learning situations, (4) the appropriateness of the two suggested change strategies for rural communities, and (5) the notion that change can and does happen within the confines of the school, separate and apart from what is happening in the community.

Starting from the position that significant differences exist between rural and urban schools and between rural and urban communities, the paper discusses a number of ways that the effective schools research does not fit the small rural school. The reactor paper also takes a broader view of the mission of the school, particularly as that mission has historically been defined in rural communities. This view, while messier, requires thinking that goes beyond the tidy solutions proposed in the Effective Rural Schools paper. Finally, questions are raised with the suggested change strategies and suggestions are made which the reactor feels are more consistent with the way rural communities conduct their business.

REACTOR PAPER

EFFECTIVE RURAL SCHOOLS

WHERE ARE WE? WHERE ARE WE GOING? HOW DO WE GET THERE?

The paper "Effective Rural Schools" presents a summary of research findings on what constitutes an effective school and a number of constructs concerning the educational change process. There are at least 5 troublesome assumptions made in the paper, assumptions which need to be re-examined if rural schools are, in fact, to become more effective.

Assumption #1: In terms of achieving effective schools, all schools tend to be alike. "There is little evidence available at this time to indicate that principals for achieving desired outcomes are significantly different for rural schools than for other schools".

Rural schools are different from urban schools in a number of significant ways. Rural schools -

o are smaller, therefore, there are fewer students in each age cohort, fewer faculty and administrators and they are less bureaucratic,

o tend to serve homogeneous populations,

o are personal and tightly linked to the communities that they serve,

o are more likely to experience a general agreement on the purposes and values of the school.

Urban schools, on the other hand -

o are large institutions, they often experience overcrowding, and serious problems of discipline and vandalism,

o serve heterogeneous populations often accompanied by a volatile mix of poor minority students and middle class teachers and administrators,

o are highly bureaucratic resulting in confused communication, diffuse decision making and a lack of clear accountability.

The activities which we now known as the effective schools research represents a response to this set of urban conditions. Because rural conditions are different, applying this body of research to the small rural school is problematic. For instance,

Effective use of instructional time - A four year research project, designed to increase student achievement through the implementation of the effective schools research, was conducted in two small rural Colorado schools (Enrollment of approximately 300 K-12). Baseline data collected through classroom observations indicated that engagement rates were averaging approximately 85%. This level of engagement, while certainly acceptable, was pushed even higher over the four years of the project. Student achievement scores did not reflect the same gains. These findings tended to confirm the fact that serious problems of discipline, absenteeism, poor classroom management are not present in small rural schools to the degree that they are found in large urban schools. Time-on-task is was not a problem.

Shared consensus on values and goals - Agreement on school mission is one of the trademarks of an effective school. This is one of the real strengths of rural schools. The close relationships which exist between the school and community assure a high level of consensus around values and goals. Teachers, administrators are hired because they "fit in". It is not unusual for a staff to consist of individuals who have grown up in the area, attended a local state college and then returned to teach. On the other hand, a problem that the effective schools research does not address is the fact that values and goals are so congruent that rural school programs tend to be parochial, and limited in the range of ideas and opportunities offered. More than one teacher, more than one superintendent has been run off because of ideas or actions that are not in tune with local mores.

Expectations - Much is said in the paper about expectations for student learning. The effective schools research, mastery learning, is based on the belief that all students are "capable of achieving excellence". Some of the more enthusiastic supporters of mastery learning suggest that all students can become "A" students. I certainly have no quarrel with high expectations for student learning, although I doubt all students will ever have equally high achievement levels. However, the issue in many rural communities around expectations goes beyond the expectations of teachers for individual students. It relates to the expectations of the community for the school. Lacking other touchstones for school quality, those making decisions about the public education use their own school experience as the basis for judging the adequacy of the school program. "Our school is so much better today than when I went to school, that it must be good enough." Furthermore, given the isolation and limited role models, rural students just do not aspire to the same career options as those students from larger communities.

Assumption #2. The question of "what schools are for" is answered by process, e.g. there are certain practices and procedures which will best accomplish the desired purposes.

Schools are for two things, the creation of an informed electorate and self reliant, self-sufficient citizens. Rural schools have both specific strengths and specific problems in achieving these outcomes that a process view of the question overlooks, problems which are not addressed by the effective schools research. Because of their small size, students attending rural schools are not redundant and therefore likely to be much more involved in the processes of schooling. The confidence which they acquire from this involvement contributes much to their sense of self efficacy. On the other hand this small size and the isolation also means that -

- o rural schools provide more limited course offerings,
- o rural students are exposed to limited notions of life options and expectations,
- o rural students and faculties often have unrealistic views of the "outside" world,
- o rapidly shrinking resources result in fewer funds for new curriculum materials, for staff development, for travel, for new ideas.
- o homogeneity, that is a strength can also be a weakness if there is a lack of conscious effort to teach about, experience, and celebrate differences.

A broader issue concerning the issue of "what schools are for" relates to the fact that rural schools play a much more important role in the community than their urban and sub-urban counterparts. To be sure, their primary function is to educate children. However, they are also the major source of entertainment, often the largest business in town, the community center, and as we are more and more realizing, the glue that holds a community together. From the perspective of the community, an effecting rural school is one that answers the question of "what are schools for" by accomplishing all of these tasks relatively well. The research literature presented in the paper relates to only one aspect of an effective rural school.

Assumption #3. Learning is best fostered through a "mastery" model of instruction which includes concepts of task analysis, lesson planning, statement of objectives, focus and mental set, input, guided practice, cues, correctives, formative assessment, enrichment, reteaching, closure, and summative assessment.

While the mastery learning concept works well for some students and some teachers, it is a linear and mechanistic approach to a very complex phenomena. David Hawkins, one of the more insightful writers on teaching and learning, in response to the linear/sequential paradigm, offers an alternative conceptual scheme for instruction base on the notion of "increasing the surface area of the curriculum". His thesis is that each student brings a unique set of understandings to any given learning experience and that to force all students into entering a learning task at the same point and have them move along the same sequence is not very productive for either the student or the teacher. Instead, if the surface area of the curriculum is increased, students can tap into the learning situation in ways that interface with their past experience. Whereas, there is no one best approach to teaching and

learning, and whereas the controlled mastery learning strategies may be useful for teaching certain skills, students must share and then assume responsibility for their learning if we are to prepare thoughtful citizens. A further concern about the mastery learning presentation relates to the discussion about teaching students "...in groups which have achieved comparable levels of learning. This practice runs contradictory to the findings of the research conducted at Johns Hopkins University on cooperative learning, an old rural school technique that served the multi-grade one or two roomed school teacher so well.
A final rural/urban difference worth noting is the fact that most rural schools do quite well at the elementary level in terms of students mastering the basic skills. Rural secondary students, as we have discussed earlier, are less well served.
Assumption # 4. Beckner's assumptions about the change process as reflected in the Stutz/Champlin constructs appear to be conflict. The Stutz model is very participatory, bottoms-up in its design and includes such notions as "variety of alternatives", "users values and goals".
The Champlin model is very controlled, top-down "Driven by data from the research and the local district, leading to the purging of ineffective practices,.." and "Using the available knowledge on change and behavioral management to plan and control every move....

Neither of the options as described in the paper are likely to be useful to the practitioner in the small rural community. While the Stutz model contains the right instincts, e.g. involvement of the broader community, recognition that each community is unique and, therefore, having different objectives and priorities, the force of the innovative process is from the bottom up...., the strategy as developed proved to be sufficiently cumbersome so as to be implemented in only one pilot site, and only then after a substantial personal investment on the part of the sponsoring laboratory.

My understanding of rural communities suggests that the Champlin components of successful change fit even less well with rural reality. The rural life style tends to be much more reactive rather than controlling of the environment. Rural folk have lived too long at the mercy of the elements to think in any other way. There is nothing proactive that a farmer can do when a hail storm rolls across this wheat field. As a result, change comes about in much more of an organic way rather than the linear/controlling way suggested.

o Change takes place in rural communities when locals are convinced that their is truly a problem that needs addressing. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." is still very much a reality.

o When problems are recognized, locals need to play an important role in designing the solution. And, while rural people are willing to accept ideas from the outside, a heavy flavor of "homegrownness" is likely to make change more acceptable.

o Rural communities cannot go it alone. Technical assistance is needed. However, how this technical assistance is given is critical. First, those providing the assistance must have established the necessary level of trust. Secondly, the type of assistance needed must be determined locally, and thirdly, the assistance must be given when the locals want it, not when the assisting agency is ready to provide it.

The paper in describing "a model for change" discusses the need for "an administrative support system". In many rural schools, the building is the district. The district leadership is the superintendent who often also serves as principal. To talk of an administrative support system is a bit of a misnomer. With good leadership, improvement can happen relatively quickly, with poor leadership, programs can deteriorate even faster. With the frequent turnover of leadership experienced by many rural districts, the infrastructure for long-term school improvement is just not available.

Assumption #5. The "model for change" presented seems to assume that change does and can happen within the confines of the school, separate and apart from what is happening in the community.

As has been noted earlier, rural schools and rural communities are very tightly linked. Changes in society require changes in curricular content. This can be a particular problem in rural schools both in terms of making decisions about the kind of change that needs to occur and mustering the resources needed to carry out that change. How do schools respond to the agricultural dislocations which have swept across the mid-west? Rural people cherish tales of how grandparents homesteaded land, land that parents saved during the depression, land that through bankruptcy is now lost to the family. This sense of personal failure is being repeated throughout the country side. Yankalovch says that we are the first generation who can predict our children will do less well economically than we did. What are the implications for rural schools as they face this new reality? Certainly the curriculum will need to change if those students, who were planning to inherit the farm, now need to look for other career options. And, as the resource base declines, fewer dollars will be available for staff, new materials and equipment required to carry out these new programs. Beckner is right on target when he discusses the value of collaboration in meeting these challenges. New partnerships will need to be formed not only with other rural schools, but with institutions of higher education as well. Satellite course delivery is just one of the benefits of such collaboration. Resources can/should also be made available for continuing professional growth and curriculum development.

Creating effective rural schools goes far beyond the boundaries of the classroom or the school. Rural schools are often the last viable social service agency in the community. Their effectiveness in the future may well be judged on how well they perform the delivery of a comprehensive set of services, of which high quality education is just one. The bigger picture is messier and will require thinking that goes beyond the tidy solutions propose in this paper. To do less, however, is not to serve well those who chose to continue to live in rural America.

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SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS: THE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Teachers confront conditions in schools which have a direct impact on classroom instruction. These conditions are directly related to attrition among teachers, the 'burnout' among teachers or the achievement of school reform. The school effectiveness literature identifies conditions which nurture instructional effectiveness. These conditions empower teachers, thus, generating a sense of efficacy and self worth among teachers. These conditions ensure teacher development and commitment. The creation of these conditions for professional practice are essential to school reform in rural settings.

The reform movement in education took on new significance with the release of the report, Time for Results, by the National Governors' Association (1986). The report represented the governors' public commitment to educational reform. The issues identified by the governors are magnified when our attention is shifted from schools in general to small or rural schools. The National Governors' Association has taken the position "...schools that don't make the grade should be declared operationally bankrupt, taken over by the states, and reorganized." (Alexander, 1986, p. 202). The response of the governors to educational reform and improvement is based upon structural and economic dimensions and not what is known about school effectiveness. Stephens (1986) argued given the mixed benefits of reorganization efforts in the past, the fact there are effective schools in rural settings, and the implications for the quality of life in rural communities that "...another round of massive and arbitrary school reorganization must be resisted." (p. 31) However, rural populations have traditionally been ignored by policymakers and educators because of their political invisibility (Massey & Crosby, 1984). Current information systems used by policymakers are not even conscious of the rural-urban differences (Gilford, Nelson, & Ingram, 1981) or ignore small schools (Minter, 1980). The image of education in rural settings which exists is either based upon nostalgia (Gulliford, 1984) or on the belief that students in rural settings are 'at risk' because of inadequate educational opportunities (Elliott, 1987; Fuller, 1982). Although the economic and structural dimensions are not to be dismissed (Good & Brophy, 1986) the issue is the development of effective schools for rural settings. Recent research suggests that effective schools possess unique characteristics. It is this knowledge of effective schools which should guide the deliberations of policymakers and not just the structural and economic issues.

The intent of this paper is to examine the literature on effective schools from the perspective of the teacher. It is the teacher who is essential to achieving effective schools. What are the implications of the effective school research for creating conditions for professional practice? For as Sykes (1983) stated if reform is to occur that to transform "...schools into 'good work' places may be the best hope of all, but the most elusive goal for public policy." (p. 588) The concepts to guide the transformation of schools into "good work" places for teachers may be found, in part, in the effective schools literature.

EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

The literature on effective schools (Corocaran & Wilson, 1985; Lane & Walberg, 1987; Purkey & Smith, 1983) identified numerous characteristics of effective schools. Purkey and Smith (1983) in a comprehensive review of the literature identified the following two sets of variables related to school effectiveness:

Organization and Structural Characteristics

a. School-site management: The leadership and staff of a school need considerable autonomy in responding to issues.

b. Instructional leadership: There needs to be leadership to initiate and maintain improvements in schools.

c. Staff stability: The frequent transfer of staff can be destructive and retard progress once a school achieves success. Stability nurtures the development "...of a coherent and ongoing school personality." (p. 443)

d. Curriculum articulation and organization: The acquisition of basic and complex skills are learned by elementary school students if the curriculum provides time and coordinates instruction. At the secondary level a curriculum should be structured and purposeful. If a student is expected to learn English, science, and mathematics than they have to take those courses and not electives.

e. Schoolwide staff development: Programs that are directly related to the instructional program with the intent of developing new skills and knowledge for the entire school are characteristic of effective schools. The programs are based on the expressed needs of the faculty and incremental in nature.

f. Parental involvement and support: The evidence was not substantial to support the notion of the parents need to be aware of school goals and student responsibilities yet the authors identified this as a characteristic.

g. Schoolwide recognition of academic success: The school publicly acknowledged the importance academic achievements through its ceremonies, symbols, and norms.

h. Maximized learning time: Instructional time was free of interruptions, actively involved students in learning, and allocated time to academic subjects.

i. District support: The district's role was "...best conceived as guiding and helping." support the program of the school.

Process Characteristics:

j. Collaborative planning and collegial relationships: Change was initiated through collaborative planning among teachers and administrators within the building. Such collaboration lead to a sense of collegiality and sharing of ideas. A sense of unity and purpose evolved from collaboration.

k. Sense of community: A sense of community among the staff which reduced isolation and alienation. This sense of community was evident in the rituals, symbols, and ceremonies.

l. Clear goals and high expectations: There was a consensus on goals, a continual monitoring, and shared expectations to work and achieve them.

m. Order and discipline: Clear, reasonable, and consistent but fairly enforced rules reduce behavioral problems and communicate the purpose of the school.

Although the characteristics identified by Purkey and Smith (1983) were largely derived from research focusing on effective schools located in urban or suburban settings Stephens (1986) noted their similarity with the frequently cited strengths of "good" schools in rural settings. Even recognizing the similarities the need to study effective schools in rural settings was identified as a major issue in education (Helge, 1986; National Rural Education Association, 1986; Stephens, 1986). Both the quantity and the quality of the research focused on education in rural settings was seriously questioned (Stephens, 1985). The literature that does exist focuses more upon structural issues and not upon effective practices. While the debate about school consolidation, largely a structural and economic issue, continues to rage few have focused on effective practices in schools which serve students in rural settings. The initial attempts by a few (Carlson & Matthes, 1986, 1987; Nachtigal, 1982; Scher, 1977) to describe efforts to create effective schools in rural settings are ignored by policy-makers and educators.

SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AND THE TEACHER

Cohen (1983) stated that the research on effective schools might be organized around the following characteristics:

a. Classroom teaching: Most variance in student achievement occurs within schools. To focus exclusively on average differences between schools assumes that all students are exposed to same educational opportunities and ignores the effects of the classroom. Effective classroom teaching is a major aspect of effective schools.

b. Coordination and management of instruction: The goals, instructional practices, and measures of student performance are coordinated within a school.

c. Shared values and culture in the school: The teachers and students developed a sense of shared values which are embedded in the culture of the school.

An essential element in effective schools is the teacher. Although Cohen (1983) stressed the importance of the principal in achieving school effectiveness the importance of what occurs in the domain of teacher, the classroom, was considered. Others (Lightfoot, 1983; Sizer, 1984) have also noted that the teacher is central to the development of effective schools. Scher (1983) stated:

> Neglecting teachers in an examination of rural education is like discussing rural health care and overlooking doctors or discussing agriculture and ignoring farmers. Delivery systems are important, support systems can be vital, and national policies often have a major impact. Yet people actually have to make the delivery system work, and in rural education these people are the local teachers. Thus the rural teacher can properly be viewed as the key to the quality of rural education. (p. 260).

Conditions for Professional Practice

It is the conditions that enable teachers to teach and students to learn which must be considered in depth. This is not to negate the importance of other dimensions of effective schools but to emphasize the importance of creating conditions for teachers to practice their profession. McLaughlin, Pfeifer, Swanson-Owens, and Yee (1986) concluded that "The conditions under which teachers work are often set up in such a way as to deny teachers a sense of efficacy, success, and self worth." (p. 422) Sykes (1983) stressed the need to change the conditions in schools so that they are

> ... hospitable to career-oriented professionals, more intellectually stimulating, and more encouraging of natural engagement on matters of practice. (p. 585)

What are the conditions for professional practice in schools located in rural settings? Muss and Stonehocker (1979) reported teachers in rural settings encounter the following conditions:

a. Teachers had 3-5 different lesson preparations daily.

b. Teachers typically must teach a class or two in which they are not adequately prepared.

c. Teachers are expected to take on extra-curricular duties.

d. Selected classes (e.g. home economics, physical education) might be composed of students from 2 to 3 different grade levels.

e. Supplies are low because of a lack of funds.

f. Teacher salaries are low.

g. Teachers are less apt to be involved in professional development programs or graduate studies.

Given these conditions and the concern expressed in the literature one wonders why teachers would choose to teach in rural settings. Matthes and Carlson (1986) inferred from the results of a study comparing reasons first year teachers selected rural, suburban or urban schools that:

> the general impression from the differences identified that those accepting teaching positions in rural school districts were more concerned about settling in to the community, whereas their counterparts in suburban and urban settings seem to be more concerned about their "professional" future. Teachers in urban/suburban settings were more concerned about continual personal and professional growth through cultural and continuing education opportunities. (p. 26)

What happens to teachers confronted with these conditions? The retention of qualified teachers is a national concern. Approximately 50 percent of those entering teaching leave after five years. The attrition rate among academically talented teachers was disproportionate when compared with less academically talented teachers (Howey, Matthes, & Zimpher, 1985). Academically talented teachers leave the profession during the first five years with greater frequency than the less academically talented teachers. It is predicted that the recruitment and retention of teachers will be a major problem in the 1990's (Darling-Hammond, 1984; Imig, 1985). The recruitment and retention of teachers for rural settings is a major issue (Bailey & Scott, 1981; Thomas, 1980; Swift, 1984). The attrition rate among teachers in rural settings was reported to be 19% as opposed to only 9% among teachers from urban settings (Allfred & Smith, 1984). It was suggested in the same study that "...the rural district has become the training ground for new teachers." (p. 5). However, what happens to teachers in rural settings who stay in the classrooms? What impact do the conditions identified by Muse and Stonehocker (1979) have on teachers? Is the level of career dissatisfaction greater among teachers in rural settings?

Studies reported some concern about the degree of satisfaction among teachers in general (Chapman & Lowther, 1982; Matthes & Duffy, 1987) and teachers in rural settings in particular (Haughey & Murphy, 1983; Rottier, Kelly, & Tomhave, 1983; Trentham & Schaer, 1985). It would appear that teachers in rural settings derived the greatest satisfaction from interactions with students (Haughey & Murphy, 1983; Kleinfeld & McDiarmid, 1986) and rapport with colleagues (Haughey & Murphy, 1983; Trentham & Schaer, 1985). Dissatisfaction among teachers in rural settings was attributed to administrative practices and society's perceptions of teachers (Haughey & Murphy, 1983; Rottier, Kelly, & Tomhave, 1983). Of particular interest is the dissatisfaction among male teachers in the 41-50 age group reported by Rottier, Kelly, and Tomhave (1983). They reported that male teachers expressed a higher level of dissatisfaction with teaching than female teachers. In an earlier study of teachers in general Chapman and Lowther (1982) also reported that male teachers expressed greater dissatisfaction than female teachers. This might be explained by what Kanter (1981) referred to as the "opportunity squeeze" in education and traditional expectations of careers for males. As Kanter (1981) stated there simply are not enough opportunities for "advancement" in education. There are limited opportunities outside the classroom for educators. This coupled with the traditional belief in our society that the worth of a man is usually derived from the amount of "success" in his career (O'Neil, 1981) might explain the differences in career satisfaction reported for male and female teachers. It is difficult to determine from these studies of teachers in rural settings if there are any factors which differentiate them from teachers in general. In fact, those factors identified by teachers in rural settings as contributing to career dissatisfaction closely parallel those cited by teachers in general (Chapman & Lowther, 1982).

Matthes and Duffy (1987) in a study of career satisfaction among secondary school teachers controlled for the type of setting. It was reported that the degree of career satisfaction among teachers was directly related to the initial level of teacher preparation, M.A.T. versus B.A. degree, and the school setting; rural, urban, and suburban. Generally, teachers in rural settings with an M.A.T. degree indicated less satisfaction with factors related to opportunities to influence decisions and recognition than teachers with an M.A.T. degrees teaching in suburban schools. The pattern was reversed for those with initial preparation at the B.A./B.S. levels. It should be noted that neither the sex or the age of the teachers accounted for any differences on the dimensions of career satisfaction in this study. Those teachers in rural settings with more extensive academic preparation were not as satisfied as their colleagues who taught in suburban schools. Those teachers with less extensive academic preparation were more satisfied in rural settings than teachers with similar academic preparation in suburban settings. It should be noted that the setting of the school or the initial level of academic preparation did not account for any differences on the dimension of salary and benefits. Teachers no matter what the setting were not satisfied with their salary or benefits! What is of particular interest was the level of dissatisfaction teachers in rural settings expressed about two frequently cited "intrinsic advantages of small schools" (Swift, 1984), the opportunity to impact decisions and support from the community. Teachers with an M.A.T. who taught in suburban settings indicated a greater degree of satisfaction on these two dimensions than teachers in rural settings with similar preparation. What accounts for these differences?

There are obvious limitations in each of the studies cited; however, one wonders if the conditions articulated by Sykes (1983) exist in schools located in rural settings. One might conclude that conditions in rural schools are generally not conducive to effective teaching and therefore effective schools. It might be asserted that rural people in general place a lower value on formal education than their urban counterparts and thus do not support the creation of conditions for teachers to practice their profession.

However, Lowe and Pinhey (1980) reported that this is not the case. They concluded that

> Rural people in general, or farm people in particular, do not-or perhaps no longer-place a lower value on formal education than do their urban counterparts. (p. 330)

It might be more accurate to conclude that our society in general does not support the creation of conditions for teachers to practice their profession. It is not an issue unique to rural settings. In our society Lortie (1975) stated "...real regard shown for those who taught has never matched the professed regard." (p. 10)

Conditions for Practice in Effective Schools

If teachers are essential to effective schools, no matter what the setting, than one needs to understand what motivates teachers. Policymakers, educators, and researchers have examined this issue from a variety of perspectives. Policymakers have proposed the creation of career ladders, differential staffing, and merit pay plans to attract the academically talented, retain qualified teachers, and to recognize outstanding teachers. These proposals continue to be generated (Bartell, 1987) in spite of research to the contrary (Rosenholtz, 1985; Sykes, 1987). Implicit in the analysis by Rosenholtz (1985) and Sykes (1987) was the recognition that the career ladder and similar schema are based on the predominate belief in autonomy and achievement. Women which comprise the majority of teachers ascribe more to the notions of attachment, intimacy, and collaboration (Gilligan, 1982). This perspective was summarized by Feiman-Nemser and Floden (1987)

> ...the study of teaching careers using male professionals and businessmen as templates has not done justice to teaching, an occupation dominated by women. The primary importance of career ambition and single-minded devotion may be appropriate for some occupations, but these characteristics need not be desirable in all teachers. For example, it could be advantageous for successful teachers to continue working in the classroom rather than aspiring to administrative work. (p. 523)

The values and beliefs represented in many of the proposals are in conflict with the research on teacher motivation. Lortie (1975) identified five reasons why an individual would elect to become a teacher. However, later research (Sykes, 1987; Yarger, Howey, & Joyce, 1977) indicated the primary reason was the desire to work with children. It is this desire to help others that motivates individuals to choose teaching as a career. This is the most significant incentive for individuals to teach. Those schools which create conditions around the development of teacher efficacy with children increase the probability of developing effective schools. It was a sense of teacher efficacy that McLaughlin and Marsh (1978) reported was "...the most powerful teacher attribute ..." in an analysis of over 400 federally supported experimental programs in schools. There was a strong positive relationship between the sense of efficacy among teachers and project outcomes. It was this sense of efficacy that research suggested was directly related to student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Brophy & Evertson, 1977). There are conditions in schools which nurture this sense of efficacy. Sykes (1987) reported that schools which support and build a sense efficacy among teachers in elementary schools are characterized as

a. emphasizing goal setting and the development of what the school represents.

b. frequent discussions involving faculty and principal about instruction. There was frequent contact among teachers to discuss instruction which was facilitated by the principal.

c. teachers collaborate frequently through observations, development of materials, and planning. The intent of the collaboration was to give and receive help.

d. teachers learning opportunities are sought out within the norms of collegiality.

e. principals fostered openness and collaborative behavior. They involved the teachers in the planning process, provide evaluations, buffer teachers from intrusions, and delegate responsibilities.

It is within this context that Sykes (1987) reported that teachers

a. develop a sense of certainty in their ability to produce academic achievement in students.

b. develop a commitment to improving their skills as teachers.

c. recognize the need to respond to the individual differences among students.

d. believe that they have the capacity to teach even the most difficult students.

e. believe excellence in teaching is tied directly to the attainment of specific academic achievements.

f. are more willing to challenge the system if a policy or practice conflicts with their professional judgement. They develop a sense of empowerment.

This summary of the yet unreported research of Rosenholtz provided by Sykes (1987) also indicated schools which nurture this sense of efficacy in teachers had lower rates of absenteeism and the students scored higher on standardized tests in the areas of reading and mathematics. Neither the size nor socio-economic status of the school were related to the creation of these conditions. It appears that it is possible to create conditions for teachers to develop a sense of self worth and efficacy while experiencing success. The fact that neither the size or socio-economic status of the school were related to these changes needs to be noted by educators in all settings; urban, suburban, and rural.

Although Sykes (1987) stressed the importance of this study and others like it (Lightfoot, 1983; Little, 1982) the need to examine the differences among elementary, middle, and secondary schools in different contexts was emphasized. Feiman-Nemser and Floden (1986) noted that the

> ...assumption that a uniform culture of teaching exists is now untenable. The recent work of Little (1982), Metz (1978), and Zeichner and Tabachnik (1983) repeatedly documents differences among cultures in different schools, and even differences among subgroups of teachers within a school (Metz, 1978; Parelius, 1980). (p. 523)

What is known about the conditions for professional practice in effective secondary schools in rural settings? Are there any common characteristics among these secondary schools? What differences exist in the "culture" of these effective secondary schools? There are a few descriptions of high schools in rural settings (Nachtigal, 1982; Perrone & Associates, 1985) but no real analysis such as those presented by Lightfoot (1983). Matthes (1987) used an interactive method based on the career history approach (LeCompte & Goetz, 1984) to determine the conditions for professional practice in four "effective" high schools located in rural settings. The four were selected from the 52 high schools in rural settings recognized as exemplary by the U.S. Office of Education (Research for Better Schools, 1986). These four high schools had the highest ratings on variables related to conditions for professional practice (e.g. collegiality, staff morale, staff influence) and represented geographically and culturally different types of rural communities. A representative sample of teachers from each school was formally interviewed. The following observations of the conditions for professional practice in effective secondary schools located in rural settings are based on 65 interviews of teachers, numerous informal conversations, observations, and review of selected documents at each school:

a. The teachers perceived the school as an integral part of the community: The teachers envisioned schools as serving the community and not the schools serving the teachers. For example, the teachers developed academic programs around the needs of community or provided a direct service. At one school the drafting class redesigned office space for a local business while at another the teachers developed a day care center to teach child care skills. There was a sense of reciprocity which had evolved between the teachers and the community. Contributions of the teachers to the communities were recognized.

b. The teachers perceived their efforts as transcending the immediate: The teachers had a sense of mission. One principal conceived of the classroom as "a pulpit" while a science teacher at the same school claimed when asked why he taught "...everyone [teachers] wants a piece of immorality...". Another science teacher with some frustration stated "...teaching is not a job it is a life..."

c. Expectations for students and teachers are clear: There was a seriousness of purpose that evolved from collaborative efforts nurtured by the principals. The academic intent of the schools was clear to the students and teachers. Students recognized their "job" was to learn. Teachers were the bosses and students recognized that they need to "...impress the people you work for..." As a drama teacher stated, her job was to "...make sure kids do what they are suppose to do at all cost..."

d. Achievements of teachers and students were recognized: The academic achievements were systematically recognized in the schools through ceremonies, symbols, and rituals. Teachers took pride in their achievements as well as those of colleagues and students.

e. Teachers had a sense of empowerment: The teachers were involved in continuous discussion of curriculum, instruction, and management. The teachers expressed a sense of responsibility for involvement in decisions that would affect the school and openly challenged the principals. With new principals there were subtle attempts to orient them to the ways of the faculty. The teachers had a sense of empowerment drawn from professional knowledge and personal commitment.

f. Teachers had a sense of self worth and efficacy: The teachers believed they possessed unique knowledge and skills. They believed that it was possible for every student to learn and structured the classrooms to actively engage the students in learning. What occurred in the classroom was important. The classrooms were free from outside intrusion.

g. Teachers were committed to professional growth: The teachers actively sought out professional development opportunities. Such efforts were supported by colleagues, the administration, and school board policies.

h. Teachers demonstrated entrepreneurial skills: There were numerous examples of teachers developing resources within the community to support academic programs. A business teacher worked closely with a local computer store to secure micro-computers for the students enrolled in business classes while a shop teachers allowed local cabinet makers and carpenters to buy time on a large wood planer to pay for the cost of the machine. The teachers constantly sought ways to raise additional funds to support instructional programs.

Although there were differences in the nature and culture of the communities and schools these were common characteristics which emerged from the exemplary rural high schools visited. Some of these characteristics are similar to those identified in the effective school literature; however, the commitment to the community, the sense of place in time, the strong sense of empowerment, and the entrepreneurial nature of these teachers were unique. The teachers had a strong investment in teaching and their communities. Teaching was not just a job but a way of life.

Conditions for Professional Practice: Conclusions

Although the effective schools literature frequently ignores the "cultural" dimensions of teaching (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986; Rosenholtz, 1987) and there is a paucity of research which incorporated the concept of setting; rural, urban, or suburban the following are some tentative conclusions about the conditions for professional practice in effective schools:

* Effective schools nurture a sense of collaboration among the teachers: Collaboration in instruction, planning, and management is an integral aspect of effective schools. There were deliberate efforts to break down the "cellular" nature of schools (Lortie, 1975) which breeds isolation and alienation among teachers. Time was made available to teachers to work in a collaborative mode. Collaborative efforts fostered a sense of community within the school.

* Teachers demonstrated a sense of efficacy, self worth, and empowerment: The belief in the teachers'ability to teach students was articulated and reinforced in the schools. The unique skills and knowledge of teachers as professionals were recognized by the administration, school board, and community. The contributions of teachers were valued. Teachers were involved in the decision-making process. This involvement was not something which was negotiated but grew out of a recognition that teachers have an expertise and those who will be affected by a decision should be involved in the process.

* Academic achievement was valued and recognized: The primary incentive for teachers was to stimulate academic achievement in students. A school that publicly recognized the academic achievements of students through ceremonies, rituals, and symbols communicated to teachers that their efforts in the classroom are valued. Such efforts build upon the primary incentive for teachers--the teaching of students.

* Teachers are involved in professional growth activities: A sense of collegiality which supported continuous professional growth among the teachers was fostered. The norms of giving and receiving help existed within effective schools. There was a balance between opportunities for individual growth

(e.g. funds to support graduate education or participation in a workshop) and those most directly related to programmatic change in the school.

- Teachers demonstrated a commitment to the community which transcended the immediate: This concept was more pronounced in rural communities; however, one gets the sense that teachers in effective schools recognized the importance of education to communities and students in particular. It was more than what Lortie (1975) identified as a service commitment. Teachers viewed the classroom as a way to improve conditions for students and the community.

SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AND THE TEACHER: TRENDS

The school effectiveness literature has implications for creating conditions for teachers which will end what Corrigan (1984) referred to as "...a spiral toward futility" for teachers (p. 17). However, there are conditions in the schools and the context of rural settings which challenge policy-makers and educators to develop creative responses. Classrooms, especially in high school, are impervious to change according to Cuban (1984). The reasons for this resistance to change in classrooms can be attributed to a variety of different sources but the reality is that teachers have limited control over what occurs in their classrooms (Cuban, 1984; Lieberman & Miller, 1978). The very structure of the educational system create conditions which are not conducive to change in instructional practices. This inherent resistance to change in instructional practices is made complex by economic forces in rural settings. Harl (1985) examined the implications of the "economic trauma" in agriculture which will affect education in rural settings. Resources for initiating school reform in rural settings will be limited in the near future. It is this economic context coupled with the inherent resistance in the education system to change in the classroom which will challenge policy-makers and educators attempts to achieve educational reform in rural settings. The trends related to the concept of effective schools are presented in three sections: preparation and certification of educators; conditions for professional practice; and research.

Preparation and Certification of Educators:

CONTEXT: In the past two years four national reports were issued which focused on reform in teacher education. The initial report, A Call for Change in Teacher Education (National Commission for Excellence in Teacher Education, 1985) was followed by the report, Tomorrow's Teachers (Holmes Group, 1986); then, A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986) and finally, Time for Results. (National Governors' Association, 1986). Implicit in these reports is the belief that the preparation of teachers needs to be structured around graduate education. It is asserted that graduate preparation will provide the basis for attainment of "professional status." This "professional status" is essential to the recruitment and retention of academically talented teachers.

As institutions of higher education consider the recommendations of the national reports new standards for the certification of educational personnel are being developed by various states. The most common change in the certification of educators involves the use of tests. Sandefur (1984) reported, by July, 1984, 32 states required some form of competency test for teachers. The American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association now support testing as one aspect of comprehensive teacher evaluation programs (Higher Education Daily, January 30, 1985).

Within this context numerous recommendations are being put forth for the preparation of educators for rural settings (Barker & Beckner, 1987; Gardener & Edington, 1983; Guenther & Weible, 1983; Horn, 1985; Jones, 1986). They assert that teaching in rural settings requires different preparation and experiences. However, Horn, Davis, and Hilt (1985) concluded from a survey of teachers in small and rural schools that there was "...little justification for eliminating elements of current teacher education programs." (p. 29). In fact, when the results of this study are compared with those of a comprehensive review of perceived problems of first year teachers (Veerman, 1984) the similarities are quite striking. Those areas of preparation perceived as important in the Horn, Davis, and Hilt (1986) for success in small schools are quite similar to those reported by Veerman (1984) for teachers in general.

TREND: Teacher education programs at major institutions of higher education will be extended requiring extensive supervised clinical experience and greater academic specialization.

Horn (1985) captured the implications of this trend for educators in rural settings in the following:

> ...programs for rural teachers will not be developed because they will not match accreditation standards and, due to the move to greater specialization and extended programs [teacher education programs], fewer teachers will be able to obtain multiple teaching endorsements and/take college work that will better prepare them to work and live in a rural community. (p. 23).

Teacher education programs focus primarily upon behavior in the classroom and seldom consider the organizational, professional, or community constraints that might influence the classroom. Teacher education ignores the very elements which shape the "culture of teaching" in schools (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986).

TREND: Schools will have to design induction and staff development programs which will systematically prepare teachers to function in effective schools.

Teacher education programs lack conceptual and programmatic coherence and fail to incorporate validated instructional practices (Howey, Matthes, & Zimpher, 1985). Institutions of higher education have historically stressed autonomy, achievement and competition among students which is incongruent with the behaviors teachers in effective schools demonstrate. It is a paradox that preparation programs which articulate a commitment to knowledge to guide practice fail to prepare teachers to demonstrate the knowledge and skills essential to function in effective schools. With the increased pressure for institutions of higher education to prepare teachers in the academic subjects schools will be expected to teach teachers the behaviors and skills necessary to function in effective schools. A more developmental approach to teacher education will need to be assumed. One can no longer assume teacher education ends at graduation.

Teacher preparation must be viewed as continuous and developmental in nature. The context in which the teacher functions will stimulate the need for a systematic staff development program.

TREND: Principals will continue to be prepared primarily as managers and not instructional leaders.

Implicit in the recent recommendations for reform in education and the school effectiveness literature is a need to change the preparation of building administrators. At the present time building administrators are prepared to function more as managers. The present expectations are for administrators to manage in spite of personal desires (Alvy & Coladaric, 1985) or what is known about the principal and the achievement of school effectiveness (Lane & Walberg, 1987). Novice principals were reported to have the most difficulty with providing instructional leadership (Alvy & Coladaric, 1985) and in reality only half of the elementary principals are reported to assist teachers with instruction (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). One hypothesis suggests that the more distant from the classroom in time and responsibilities the less likely the principal will provide the essential supervision of instruction to achieve school effectiveness. As Chamberlain and Goldsberry (1984) stated

> Rural schools suffer under many burdens. Unable to employ full time individuals due to financial constraints or given the limitations of rather low population density over a wide area, the prospect for improving instructional practices through direct supervision seems bleak. (p. 131)

The need for instructional leadership is clear but principals, especially in rural settings, are confronted with a multiplicity of time demands that are more immediate (Alvy & Coladarci, 1985). Instructional leadership by necessity becomes a low priority and in the end is neglected. Chamberlain and Goldsberry (1984) suggested the supervision of teachers in rural settings might have to be done by peers if it is done.

Conditions for Professional Practice:

CONTEXT: The conditions for professional practice are not ignored by those concerned about reform in education (Carnegie Forum on Education and Economy, 1986; Holmes Group, 1986). However, some of the policies for changing the conditions for teachers have received sharp criticism (Rosenholtz, 1985) which is summarized by Feiman-Nemser and Floden (1986) in the following statement:

> ...recent policy initiatives to address the absence of rewards in teaching may be misguided in their exclusive focus on increases in merit pay and opportunities for career advancement. These solutions assume that teachers place most value on the extrinsic rewards of money and power. In fact, teachers may value increased opportunities for collegial interaction or job sharing. The point is to offer an array of rewards that will meet teachers' needs. (p. 523)

Although the need to improve the financial rewards for teachers is important one needs to recognize that effective schools create conditions that go beyond the extrinsic rewards. If reform is to occur than conditions need to be created in the school that nurture change in instructional practices.

TREND: Public policy will continue to use, at the local and state levels, extrinsic rewards to improve the conditions for professional practice in the schools.

Policy-makers and educators will continue to apply the concepts of merit pay, differential staffing, and career ladders in an attempt to improve the conditions for professional practice in the schools. The intent of many of these policies is to improve the financial rewards for educators and to create opportunities for teachers to assume more leadership roles. Given the limited funds available schools in rural settings will be placed at a disadvantage in the recruitment and retention of teachers. However, it is unclear if these efforts to improve the extrinsic rewards will directly impact instructional practices which is essential if school effectiveness is to be achieved. Whether removing "outstanding" teachers from the classrooms to assume expanded responsibilities seems to be questionable public policy if the intent is to improve instruction. Public policy should ensure "outstanding" teachers remain in the classroom. Public policy should foster the conditions of collegiality, collaboration, and a sense of efficacy among teachers while ensuring appropriate financial rewards for teachers.

TREND: Teachers will be more involved in decisions concerning the curriculum, instruction, and management of local schools.

The significance of involving teachers in the decision making process was clearly demonstrated in the staff development (McLaughlin & Marsh, 1978) and school effectiveness literature. Schools will need to structured to create time for these activities. To expect teachers to assume additional responsibilities without relief may only add to the existing burden of teachers (Ducharme & Matthes, 1987). The empowerment of teachers will enhance their sense of efficacy which will directly affect personal development and classroom instruction (Ashton & Webb, 1986).

TREND: Rural and small schools will continue to form consortiums for instructional and staff development needs.

There will always be a need to provide education opportunities to residents of sparsely populated areas in this nation. Given the limited resources more cooperative arrangements will be made to deliver direct instruction to the students and provide staff development opportunities for the teachers. These consortiums will provide to local schools or attendance centers assistance to teachers in the areas of curriculum and instruction. Such arrangements are essential to remove the professional isolation teachers experience in rural settings and foster collegiality and cooperation. Successful consortiums will incorporate some of the concepts of the "teacher centers" movement.

TREND: Technology will impact the conditions for professional practice in schools.

The National Governors' Association Task Force on Technology (Sununu, 1986) envisioned technology as an integral part of school reform. Of particular interest was the use of interactive telecommunication systems to deliver a wide variety of educational programs. Joe Newlin, Executive Director, National Rural Education Association, claimed that interactive telecommunication systems are

> ...the breakthrough we've been looking for to offset the lack of curriculum opportunities that rural schools have been faced with because of scarce resources (Brown, 1985, p. 1).

Alaska has used technology extensively to deliver educational programs to remote villages. The use of technology has implications for teachers. Teachers will need time to plan how best to utilize these systems in instructional programs. Technology will demand more careful planning and teachers may become more "managers" of educational experiences. Whether interactive telecommunication systems are a 'boom or bust' is dependent on the teacher. Whether it enhances the instructional program of a schools will be determined by the teacher. Technology has the potential to stimulate teachers or merely become another burden.

Research:

CONTEXT: To give emphasis to the concerns expressed earlier (Helge, 1986; Stephens, 1985) about the lack of research on effective schools in rural settings one needs to only read the following statement by Good & Brophy (1986)

> ...most effective schools research has been conducted in urban schools, so its application to suburban schools is unknown. (p. 598)

The application to schools in rural settings is simply ignored. There is not a coherent body of knowledge which focuses upon the characteristics of effective schools in rural settings. Although the literature is full of assertions about the quality of education in rural settings there are no studies which allow comparative statements to be made about schools. Stephens (1985) identified numerous reasons for the lack of research in rural education but that does not alleviate the difficulty in predicting trends with any degree of certainty. The following are quite tentative predictions:

TREND: School effectiveness research will incorporate more of an ethnographic perspective.

An ethnographic research paradigm will be used with increased frequency to understand effective schools. Examples of this can be seen in Cohen's (1983) reference to "faculty norms and school ethos" while Feiman-Nemser and Floden discussed the "the cultures of teaching." Behavioral psychology has dominated the research on school effectiveness, in part, because of the difficulties inherent in ethnographic approaches. Ethnographic approaches require more time and present difficulties in making inferences from the observations. However, the initial efforts in the application of ethnographic approaches to education clearly indicate that there are cultural dimensions (e.g. norms, values, rituals, ceremonies) which account for differences among schools and classrooms. The ethnographic approaches will provide "clinical insights" into effective schools that might better shape the research questions and procedures of the more structured behavioral approaches. Schools in rural settings, because of their relative isolation and hetereogeneity, provide excellent subjects for the application of the ethnographic research paradigm. Through the application of the ethnographic approach we might glean some insight into effective schools which could shape public policy and school improvement efforts.

THEME: The conditions for professional practice in schools will become a major theme in the school effectiveness research.

The purpose of schools is to provide educational opportunities to students no matter what the setting; urban, suburban, or rural. The realization that the classroom contributes directly to that purpose (Cohen, 1983) will stimulate research to consider how instructional practices can be changed. The school effectiveness literature provides some insight into the conditions in the school that impact the domain of the teacher, the classroom. There is a direct relationship among the conditions that nurture collegiality, collaboration, and efficacy among teachers and classroom instruction. There are organizational and contextual elements which may contribute directly to the conditions for professional practice. However, the differences among elementary, middle and secondary schools in different contexts need to be examined. The contribution of these latter elements to the development of conditions for professional practice is not known.

SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AND THE TEACHER: SUMMARY

It is asserted in this paper that teachers confront conditions in schools which have a direct impact on classroom instruction. These conditions are directly related to attrition among teachers, the 'burnout' among teachers, or the achievement of school reform. A review of the literature on school effectiveness identified a number of conditions which are directly related instructional effectiveness. These conditions empower teachers thus, generating a sense of efficacy and self worth among teachers. These conditions ensure teacher commitment and professional development.

In addition, a number of trends in teacher education, conditions in the schools, and research were identified in the paper. It is apparent that the policy-makers and educators have recognized the importance creating conditions for professional practice; however, there is some uncertainty about the most appropriate response to the issue. The responses will either contribute to the teacher's "spiral of futility" (Corrigan, 1984) and relegate teachers to the "...shadowed social standing..." (Lortie, 1975) or create conditions for teachers to function as empowered professionals.

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REACTION TO PAPER BY WILLIAM A. MATTHES:
SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS: THE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE

Jack Sanders
Appalachia Educational Laboratory

Prepared for the National Rural Education Research Forum
Lake Placid, New York
October 16-17, 1987

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ABSTRACT

This paper responds to issues raised in the major paper, School Effectiveness: The Teachers' Perspective, presented by William A. Matthes at the NREA/USDOE National Rural Education Research Forum on October 15-17, 1987, at Lake Placid, New York.

Issues responded to include: school effectiveness in rural settings, professional practice in classrooms, teacher decisionmaking, technology use and education, instructional/staff development consortiums, public policy, principal training, induction/staff development programs, and teacher education programs.

REACTOR PAPER

Introduction

What follows are some initial reactions to School Effectiveness: The Teachers' Perspective by William A. Matthes. I label my reactions "initial" because the printer's deadlines do not allow me sufficient time either to review the references cited in the paper or to submit this reaction to peer review. One other qualification: my frame of reference is knowledge transformation as opposed to knowledge production. My business is synthesizing new knowledge into products useful to practitioners--not designing and carrying out systematic inquiries about educational phenomena. With those two qualifications in mind, let us proceed with a consideration of some of the many important issues raised by the author.

Issue

There is a need for ethnographic research to investigate the effectiveness of schools in rural settings (p. 35).

Reaction

Based on our experience with rural schools in AEL's Region, we certainly support this issue. Unlike schools in many metropolitan areas, rural schools tend to be inextricably tied to their communities. In many cases the school system is the largest employer in the rural community and much of the community's social life revolves around the local schools. Research concerning the characteristics of effective rural schools should take into account the community context in which the rural school operates. In fact, maybe "research on the characteristics of effective rural schools" is an inappropriate description of what we want to do. Perhaps "characteristics of effective rural communities" or "the role of local schools in effecting rural community development" or "correlates of educational excellence in rural settings" would be more appropriate titles for studies of exemplary rural schools. Or is Paul Nachtigal's more direct "rural school improvement efforts" sufficient? Or is this a moot point?

Still, it would be a shame not to build on the knowledge gained from the school effectiveness literature. And that literature is a bit underrepresented, I think, in the Matthes paper. For example, I do not recall any mention of outstanding contributors John Goodlad or Ron Edmonds; and the Purkey-Smith literature synthesis used to characterize the state-of-the-art of school effectiveness research was written in 1983. More to the point, AEL has applied successfully the school effectiveness literature in rural settings. We have incorporated 11 school effectiveness characteristics as part of a school improvement diagnosis system used to date in 25 school district studies. Many of the districts studied were rural. All of them seemed to accept, value, and utilize the primarily quantitative information provided them about effective schools characteristics such as use of instructional time, use of assessment, and parental involvement. So, in our experience, the school effectiveness literature does provide a basis for looking at some aspects of rural schools.

Issue

The conditions for professional practice in classrooms will become a major theme in the school effectiveness research (p. 36) and teachers will be more involved in decisions concerning curriculum, instruction, and management of local schools (p. 32).

Reaction

It seems to me that there are a number of indications that these predictions are correct: (A) Research on classroom management has been one of the major strands of the school effectiveness literature. The University of Texas R & D Center for Teacher Education produced some excellent classroom management training products for use by principals and teachers. (B) Dave Berliner's "teacher as executive" work resulted from extensive observation in classrooms. (C) Current work on higher order thinking skills, teaching models, student motivation, and at-risk students seems to be focusing our attention on classroom practice. (D) The current developmental work on teacher and principal preparation, certification, and induction programs is spinning off by-products with direct implications for, or application to, classroom practice. (E) One of the major tenets of the "restructuring of education" discussions seems to be decentralization, i.e., returning control of education to the local school and enhancing the professional roles of the principal and teacher.

Issue

Technology will impact the conditions for professional practices in schools (p. 33).

Reaction

There seems to be little question that technology will impact the conditions in classrooms. Stiffer state graduation standards are leading rural and small schools to pursue such options as using satellite or fiber-optic technology (distance learning) to offer required courses. In addition, Congress is considering legislation that could provide funds and technical assistance for rural states with a plan for utilizing such technology.

Business and industry, responding to the many partnerships local schools have forged with them, are encouraging both technology use and technology education. Business and industry will likely expand their involvement with schools because of the forecasted shortage of skilled workers and because of the increasing cost of training some new workers in basic skills.

The extent of technology's use and impact in schools depends on installation support. Those of us who have lived through language labs and ITV, and even the first wave of computers in the schools, know that implementation--training, materials, and technical assistance--will determine whether or not the technology impacts classroom conditions for good or ill.

Issue

Rural and small schools will continue to form consortiums for instructional and staff development needs (p. 33).

Reaction

"Networking" as John Naisbitt has labeled it, will continue most likely among rural and small schools. So will cooperatives and other intermediate service agencies. However, if the previous prediction about the widespread use and impact of technology comes to pass, the structure of future consortia and the local flavor of them could change dramatically. For example, West Virginia has established a statewide telecommunications network for its 55 county school districts, in addition to operating eight regional education service agencies. Some out-of-state rural and small schools dial into the West Virginia telecommunications network to upload and download information about education issues, including instruction and staff development. Thus, if technology shapes the networks, contiguity will be less important than interests in determining who networks with whom.

Issue

Public policy will continue to use, at the local and state levels, extrinsic rewards to improve conditions for professional practice in the schools (p. 31).

Reaction

Generally, I would agree with this position. However, I do not read the prospects of such public policy to be as bleak as the author portrays them, nor do I think that such policy is a universal response. For example, the statement by the research and policy committee of the Committee for Economic Development, Investing in Our Children (1985), says:

> It is traditional wisdom in the business world that a corporation is only as good as the people it employs. Similarly, our schools can be no better than the teachers who staff them.
>
> This Committee believes that improvements in the quality of teaching must come from enhancing and strengthening the professional roles of teachers, maximizing their abilities and opportunities to exercise judgment and make decisions, and reshaping and upgrading their working environments. Such actions, together with measures designed to assure high standards and competitive salaries and to encourage community and parent support, can help to attract and retain highly qualified people and improve the effectiveness of the entire profession. (p. 59)

Additionally, we are just coming out of the first wave of the reform movement. In our Region, Tennessee rode the peak of that wave with its Better Schools Act of 1984. Now a new state administration, including the newly elected commissioner of schools, is reviewing the positive and negative impacts of that rough ride to see what stays and what "gets adjusted." It will be interesting to see what happens in Tennessee where the deputy to the state commissioner is a former instructional supervisor and past president of the Tennessee Education Association, and where the head of the state's Career Ladder Division was most recently a teacher in Knoxville. It would not surprise me if future public policy in Tennessee reflects more sensitivity to the classroom conditions of the professional teachers. And Tennessee's experience and policy response could suggest an alternative direction for other states to consider.

Issue

Principals will continue to be prepared as managers and not instructional leaders (pp. 29-30).

Reaction

I could agree with the assertion that many principals will continue to function more as managers than as instructional leaders, especially at the secondary level. However, preparation programs and professional association training sessions definitely seem to be stressing the instructional leadership function.

AEL's work with school principals over the last ten years suggests also that practicing principals are worrying more about providing instructional leadership. Interestingly, some, recognizing that they are not comfortable in that role, are delegating it to key teachers and teacher groups. Other principals are going to school on it. For example, Tennessee provided extensive training to its administrators on school effectiveness characteristics as part of its Career Ladder program.

It may not be appropriate to couch this issue as a dichotomy between management and instructional leadership. Since many principals are recognizing it as part of their role, and since some training programs seem to be stressing it, maybe instructional leadership should be conceptualized as part of school management.

Issue

Schools will have to design induction and staff development programs that will systematically prepare teachers to function in effective schools and teacher education programs at major institutions will be extended requiring extensive clinical experience and academic specialization (pp. 28-29).

Reaction

Local and state mandated induction programs are more than a trend in this Region. Recall the earlier example of Tennessee: The Career Ladder Program spells out training and performance required for local teachers to advance. Kentucky implemented in 1985 a beginning teacher internship program that includes providing a mentor (experienced teacher) for the beginner. Virginia has set up regional centers at various teacher training institutions to assist with the operation of its Beginning Teacher Assessment Program. Thus, rather than schools having to design their own induction programs, I think the trend will be that they will cooperate with state-mandated programs or collaborate with other educational agencies, including local teacher training institutions, to plan and implement such programs.

Summary

To me, School Effectiveness: The Teachers' Perspective boils down to a helpful investigation of two important questions: (1) What can we infer from the school effectiveness literature and other selected literature about establishing in schools working conditions that will optimize teacher satisfaction, and (2) What additional research is needed to help us optimize teacher satisfaction in rural schools? I think this investigation has raised some important issues that might lead to new understandings down the road.

Other random issues that occurred to me while I was reflecting on the paper include:

- Do we really know what teachers' perceptions of the school effectiveness literature are? Do we need to know?
- Have we used our research on how policymakers use research information to affect the formulation of national policy? Is anybody reporting the results?
- Do we need to plan for a new synthesis of research on rural, small schools to capitalize on all the new R & D initiatives in the schools and to link the new with the existing knowledge base?
- What is teacher empowerment? How does teacher empowerment differ from teacher efficacy and self worth? What does the school effectiveness literature say about teacher empowerment, efficacy, and self worth?

REACTOR BACKGROUND

Jack Sanders was one of two reactors for the paper authored by William A. Matthes, School Effectiveness: The Teachers' Perspective. Sanders received his B.A. in English Literature in 1963, his M.A. in Communication Theory in 1969, and his Ed.D. in Diffusion of Educational Innovations in 1971. He is currently the Deputy Executive Director of the Appalachia Educational Laboratory in Charleston, West Virginia. This position includes managing Labwide tasks, including regional needs assessment, evaluation of AEL's regional impact, and collaboration with the nationwide network of Regional Laboratories and R & D Centers. Sanders is also responsible for conceptualizing Laboratory development activities, including identification of projects eligible for nongovernment support and relevant new funding sources. He also conducts studies using the Profile of School Excellence, an assessment package based on the school effectiveness literature which assists school districts in diagnosing their school improvement needs. Prior to his work at AEL, Sanders was a teacher/administrator at several elementary and secondary schools and a teacher/project director at several colleges and universities.

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A Reaction to *School Effectiveness:The Teachers' Perspective*

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National Rural Education Research Forum
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Abstract

Research into effective schooling consistently reports specific variables indicative of instructional success. Continued effective teaching research will benefit from an analysis of the concept of culture and its relationship to rural settings, from an analysis of the nature of teaching and cognition in rural settings, and from the use of ethnographic techniques as a research perspective. Ethnographic perspectives, however, require enormous time commitments and require specialized training outside the scope of most researchers in rural education. Adequately conducted field studies will thus be difficult to achieve and the promise of ethnography may not be realized.

Introduction

School Effectiveness: The Teacher's Perspective provides a review of major attributes commonly agreed upon as indicators of excellence. This reaction focuses upon three sets of issue generating concepts which have a direct bearing upon the fruitfulness of effective school research in rural settings:

1. The concept of culture and its meaning in the rural settings to be studied.
2. The uniqueness of teaching and cognition in rural settings.
3. The power of ethnographic methodologies to provide insights into rural settings.

Each of the three variables points to substantive issues related to rural school effectiveness and the rural school effectiveness research agenda. This reaction suggests that cultural systems in many rural settings run counter to the notion of empowerment, that ruralness per-se does not receive attention in terms of teaching and cognition, and that ethnographic methologies demand great amounts of a researcher's time in field settings which make its widespread use unlikely.

Issue 1: Culture, Rural Education, and Empowerment

Empowerment of teachers in the decision making process represents a major factor attributed to effective schools. Rural settings, however, often possess cultural assumptions which run counter to empowerment. Empowerment and related professional growth suggests a form of power sharing which blurs, or run counters to, traditional lines of authority. Rural southern education management procedures, for example, continue to focus upon hiring teachers and principals who have family, friendship, and religious ties to the rural county in question. Individual school board members often view themselves as integral to the hiring process and operate as gate keepers in the employment process. Often school board members view professional considerations as a distant second to issues of church and kinship. In such conditions teachers are fully integrated into the value structures of the community and the school systems. Lines of authority demand that teachers accept the edicts from higher administrative sources, close their classroom doors, and teach the curriculum without being a trouble maker. Relationships between teachers may indeed be close, but colleagiality revolves around associations other than those generated by professional considerations.

A related consideration deals with the origin of the empowerment and related concepts. Empowerment eminates from urban centers of power such as state education associations, state departments of education, and universities. Such bureaucacies contend for power and influence in the impersonal arena of professional confrontation and negotiation without the intimate personal ties and social contacts of rural settings. School effectiveness research must address the manner in which urban generated concepts can be transplanted into rural cultural settings without destroying the rural culture which is supposedly valued. One is reminded of the dangers inherent in borrowing concepts and methodologies from one discipline and using them in another discipline. Biological concepts (ecological balance) and business concepts (management by objectives) offer examples of concepts which fail to deliver the same potency in educational settings as they did in their original disciplines.

Finally, school effectiveness research must deal with a variety of rural cultural systems. The history of illiteracy, for example, suggests that strong differences exist between varied cultural sub-groups. Southern states exhibited, and continue to exhibit, higher illiteracy rates and school drop-out rates than do their rural mid-western counterparts (Akenson and Neufeldt, 1984, 1985). The contrast between contemporary illiteracy in the South and in the Mid-West even prompted recent congressional comment. Tennessee congressman James Cooper stated that he would be pleased to have the Tennessee illiteracy rate equal to that of Iowa. Ruralness cannot be treated as a uniform variable. Research on effective schooling must analyze the surrounding rural culture and determine the manner in which strategies must take into account the regional sub-culture which schools serve. The school effectiveness research, however, appears to be a relatively uniform set of assumptions which make little commentary on cultural variables.

Issue 2: Teaching and Cognition

Rural educators advance rural education as a unique enterprise. Goodlad's research (1984) suggested that rural schools fit a common national pattern of teacher dominated talk at a low level of cognition. Implicitly, the nature of teaching and cognition did not differ among rural and urban teachers and children. Akenson (1985, 1986) found no differences in the teaching methodologies or apparent cognitive processes of rural, southern teachers and children. As a non-participant observer and as a participant observer

Akenson found rural southern children processing instruction in a manner consistent with conventional cognitive models. Transcripts of instruction in all subjects K-8 defy a researcher to differentiate the urban or rural origin of the rural, southern instruction. Such results may be the result of urban induced uniformity, the result of uniform cognitive functioning within western culture, the result of the sampling procedure, or the result of inadequate conceptual tools.

Effective school research implies that effective rural schools exhibit the same characteristics of effective urban schools. Specific examination of teaching methologies fail to differentiate between their application and characteristics in rural and urban settings. Talbert, Fletcher, and Phelps (1987) comparison of middle Tennessee rural schools to the Kappa Delta Pi 100 Good Schools study included examination of teaching methodogies. Selected instructional techniques such as "Critical thinking and reasoning skills" (p.60) assumed that rural teachers accepted the same attributes to the term as did their urban counterparts. The rural middle Tennessee study dealt with the perceptions of teachers as opposed to the actual delivery of instruction and variations of instructional delivery which might have occured due to the rural culture.

The absence of concern for differences in teaching and cognition may be observed in rural education meetings. The 1985 Rural Education Forum in Kansas City, Missouri dealt with topics such as "Recruitment and Preparation of Teachers," "Equity in Rural School Finance," and "State Policy Trends." Presentations at the 1986 National Education Association convention in Little Rock, Arkansas further reflect the absence. One presentation dealing with the integration of higher order thinking skills in rural schools failed to differentiate the adjustments which various teaching methods would require in rural settings.

Effective rural schools may, or may not, demand adjustments in instructional strategies based upon student attributes derived from rural culture. Good schools may indeed be good schools as reflected in a set of universally valid attributes. However, the neglect of such questions does not enhance the utility of effective rural schools research. The conceptual base of rural education retains a void based upon acceptance of assumptions and practices indigenous to the urban culture from which it supposedly differs.

Issue 3
Ethnographic Research and Effective Rural Schools

Ethnographic methodologies do indeed promise substantive rewards in coming to grip with the dynamics of rural education, the cultural context of rural education, and characteristics of effective rural schools. Ethonography, however, possesses its own abortive seeds which may bring to naught its promise for research on effective rural schools. Ethnography demands enormous amounts of a researcher's time. Like tobacco, ethnography is a labor intensive enterprise, but does not carry with it a guaranteed profit or price support. Works such as Smith and Geoffrey's (1968) analysis of an urban classroom and Spindler's (1982) ethnographic collection in Doing the Ethnography of Schooling make clear the intensive demands upon the researcher. Valid ethnography cannot be accomplished in a few simple visits to a field site. It remains to be seen if rural education researchers and their respective institutions have the time, resources, and "stick-to-it-iveness" to labor in the ethnographic vineyard. "Quick and dirty" may be too beguiling, to attractive, to resist. The lure of ethnograpic insights may pale as the reality of ethnograpic labor manifests itself in the context of a researcher's other institutional obligations and the ease with which other forms of data may be collected.

The training and re-training of rural education researchers to engage in ethnographic studies raises further questions. First, will graduate probgrams produce sufficient numbers of educational ethnographers willing to ply their skills in a rural setting? Doctoral programs with strong ethnographic components may tend to send graduates to major land-grant or private universities whose missions do not match with rural education. Second, can current rural education researchers trained in other traditions be adequately enculturated (retreaded!?) through institutionally sponsored colloquia, through personal commitment to reading in a new field, and through attendnace at appropriate professional meetings? The initial rush to ethnography could well fade as researchers realize the demands of field work, relate ethnographic demands to institutional resources, and realize that the complexity of techniques such as analytic induction belie the apparent simplicity. The difficulty of publishing results in nationally refereed journals may prove more difficult than comparable attainments in their previous specialty areas. In addition, the conceptual validity of ethnographic techniques may well escape the peers of traditionally trained rural education researchers who think in terms of sample size and external validity (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982). Editors and manuscript referees of rural education journals may view a single school or classroom as an invalid sample size and an ethnographic research design as no research design at all.

Ethnography, then, does provide powerful techniques for dealing with significant aspects of rural education and rural effective school research. The problems lie not in the power and validity of ethnography but in the demands which ethnography will place upon the research community to whose benefit ethnography will be directed.

Summary

Rural education research and the specific focus of rural school effectiveness merit increased application of the powerful conceptual and technical tools derived from ethnography. Rural education resesearchers will benefit from the use of conceptual frameworks which direct attention to current and to antecedent relationships between structural components found inside and outside the immediate school setting. Valid ethnographic research may well be a concern to which the Research Committee of the National Rural Eeducation Association should address itself. A systematic approach to ethnography might include:

1. Sponsoring substantive training sessions and collaborative efforts to conceptualize research questions and research designs.

2. Funding model ethnographic research projects which clearly demonstrate appropriate methodologies and which address key questions related to rural school effectiveness.

3. Funding collaborative sessions to prepare ambitious funding requests to major public and private sector agencies.

The allure of ethnography should be exploited to create a rural education research community which is capable of reaping the dividends promised by qualitative methods. Ethnography need not follow the whims of fashion and fade as a new research fashion emerges to capture attention. Rural education research and the students who ultimately stand to profit from ethnographic insights deserve far better.

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RESEARCH AND ACTION NEEDS IN RURAL SCHOOL FINANCE

Robert E. Lamitie

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ABSTRACT

This paper was prepared for the National Rural Education Research Forum held in Lake Placid on October 15-17, 1987. It summarizes some recent research and trends related to the equitable financing of rural schools.

Research is reviewed concerning problems which are unique to or widely shared among rural schools. These problems include small school and district size associated with population sparsity, low fiscal ability to support needed educational services from local resources, disproportionate populations of minorities and the poor, state and federal grant programs biased toward large grants and large districts, and a special need for the use of modern technology to individualize instruction.

The paper suggests that the benefits and advantages of small schools are becoming more apparent, and that given adequate support of its development, an emerging "technology of individualization" may soon make it possible for school quality to be independent of school size.

Needed reform of state and federal policies toward financing rural education are the subject of a section of the paper which suggests research and action priorities relating to such policies. The chief suggested research priorities relate to (1) developing improved census, financial, pupil need, and cost data to document rural needs, (2) development projects related to the "technology of individualization" and (3) instructional software development.. Action priorities relate to (1) active participation in near-term political agenda setting, (2) state and federal support of more equitable funding provisions relating to rural schools, and (3) seeking political alliances relating to educational and fiscal needs shared by rural schools with others.

The paper touches only most briefly on the important problem of rural economic stagnation or decline and the related out-migration in search of jobs. A major response to these problems is the development of rural community economic development agencies and projects. Nor does the paper deal with rural problems of staff development. These are the subjects of other papers at the same forum.

The financing of rural schools is likely to see important changes over the next decade because of changes in education, changes in the priorities and methods of state and federal school finance, and basic economic and political changes.

There is a chance that school quality and curriculum diversity may become independent of school size, good news for rural schools. Regarding state and federal school finance policy, new aid may increasingly be targeted to solve specific problems and achieve desired educational results. Cost accounting is likely to increase as a factor in making decisions as to policy.

At the national economic level the need for "competitiveness" may focus attention on using education to increase productivity and economic development. Because of the budget deficit, competition for federal resources will be intense. A key immediate goal of rural schools should be to document their needs and the costs of meeting them.

While the outlook for rural schools over the next generation is positive, there is a critical need for state and federal resources to make an equitable contribution to rural education during the period of transition.

This paper begins with a section discussing recent research relating to small schools, including their increasingly apparent advantages. It discusses the main policies that have been applied in aid of small schools and suggests some policy directions and needed additional research.

Subsequent sections deal with other widespread problems affecting rural school finance. These are divided in four major categories, data needs, rural minority populations, fiscal equity through aid formulas, and other needs including elimination of "density bias" and other serious problems of federal and state policy. Each section makes suggestions as to needs and priorities. The paper ends with a brief summary of what are suggested to be the highest priorities.

SCHOOL SIZE, SPARSITY, AND RELATED POLICIES

Despite the fact that rural schools are extremely diverse, perhaps the single characteristic most typical of them is their small size, reflecting the population sparsity typical of rural areas. This section will deal first with research on school size in relation to school quality.

It will then discuss the four principal policies states have adopted regarding small schools and make some suggestions on each. These are "sparsity aid" to deal with the higher per pupil costs of small schools, school district consolidation, regional service agencies, and the use of technology to make it possible to deal with pupils in smaller groups or individually.

School Size and School Quality, Part 1 One of the more influential recent books in Education has been "A Place Called School", by John Goodlad (1984) which is generally agreed to have had a substantial impact on educational thinking and practice since its publication.

It reports on a study involving parents, teachers, students, and administrators in some thousand classrooms in 38 schools. The intent was "to study schools as total entities". A composite index of satisfaction with each school was developed, along with a number of other indicators of school quality. The schools were ranked on this satisfaction index, which proved "to be a remarkably accurate predictor of nearly all the others". The simplest school characteristic associated with the satisfaction index was small size. Smaller schools were found to be more satisfying.

The other major findings as to the differences between the more and less satisfying (and effective) schools, findings that will be no surprise to most of those at this conference, were that in the more satisfying schools

(1) the climate was more academic in its orientation;

(2) students perceptions of their classrooms and teachers were more positive;

(3) parents perceived themselves to be well informed and having easy access. They perceived an appropriate balance of power between teachers and administrators, in contrast with the less satisfying schools where there was an impression of "nobody in charge";

(4) mutual trust and a healthy relationship between teachers and principal were the norms; and

(5) there was more commitment to self evaluation and self renewal.

One of the schools intensively studied by the project staff, referred to as Dennison, was a 61 pupil junior-senior high school. It consistently scored high, often among the highest, on the characteristics on which schools were evaluated.

In his recommendations, Goodlad said, (p. 310);

> "Conant suggested that a high school with 100 graduating seniors would be sufficiently large to facilitate his recommended curriculum. Some school boards and superintendents concluded, apparently, that more would be better and pushed for school consolidation, usually accompanied by extensive busing. Expansion in school size usually was accompanied by curricular expansion, the availability of more alternatives, and the teaching and course resources necessary to tracking. I have difficulty of arguing the virtue of any of these, given our data."
>
> "...The burden of proof, it appears to me, is on large size. Indeed, I would not want to face the challenge of justifying a senior...high of more than 500 to 600 students....Given our data, I would not want to risk losing what Dennison appears to have, with only 61 students in the junior and senior high schools combined, for the assumed curricular advantages of consolidating with another school - which in this as in many other instances would be quite far distant. Admittedly the low student-teacher ratio required to provide Dennison's surprisingly rich curriculum is costly, but substantial costs would be incurred through consolidation."

Goodlad added to the large number of recent recommendations against "tracking" students. Tracking is an outcome of the way large schools are organized based on the teach-a-whole-class-at-a-time assumption. Regarding the fact that students learn at different rates, he said tracking "serves as an organizational device for hiding awareness of the problem rather than doing something about it."..."The decision to track is essentially one of giving up on the problem of human variability in learning."

The Goodlad study was concerned with curriculum, teaching, and related subjects, not with costs and financing. This reviewer does not find it as surprising as did Goodlad that a small school can provide a rich curriculum. One of the needs indirectly pointed out by the Goodlad study is the need for more data concerning the appropriate relationships between size and costs, especially in schools which take full advantage, as Dennison appears to be beginning to do, of the advantages of small size. Dennison appears to be one of the many rural schools which is capitalizing on these advantages so as to be an active participating developer of an emerging technology of individualization.

A word is appropriate here as to the use of the term "technology of individualization". I use this term as does Swanson (1979) to refer to a system of organizing and mobilizing time, human resources, machines, student interests, curriculum materials, and communications media which is sufficiently developed and documented as to be referred to as a technology.

While the use of modern electronics, computers and software is related to this technology it should not be inferred that the emphasis is entirely on the use of scientific or electronic devices. On the contrary, the emerging "technology of individualization", is one of combining resources. It is learning to organize time, together with human, material and technical resources most effectively in order to achieve the goal of true individualization of instruction.

School Size and Quality,Part 2; Policy research in school efficiency

Coleman, (1986), in a study relating to the provincial school finance and educational policies of British Columbia, was concerned with the effectiveness and efficiency of schools in the province from the point of view of an economist. He found "a rather surprising negative relationship between costs and achievement." He was interested whether student achievement and per pupil expenditures represent adequate measures of school district "effectiveness". He reviewed the Goodlad study just discussed in addition to the well known studies by Lightfoot (1983), and Rutters, (1979). Both of these, like the Goodlad study, found reason to put considerable favorable emphasis on school atmosphere and small size.

He concluded that student achievement and school expenditure are useful but not sufficient indicators of school effectiveness, and suggested that a third element, "district ethos" "is potentially a predictor both of modest costs and high achievement." District ethos, he suggested, "has something in common with Goodlad's measure of general satisfaction, but goes beyond it into an examination of shared beliefs and the practices contingent on these." Without the notion of district ethos, the relationship between high achievement and moderate costs is not explicable, he found, nor are differences in effectiveness between apparently similar school districts.

District size, Coleman found, is "perhaps the most interesting issue to emerge from the initial statistical analysis"..."the unusually successful districts are rather small. Size, beyond a modest level, might well be a handicap to effectiveness."

Coleman suggested that a characteristic of unusually effective corporations found by Peters and Waterman in In Search of Excellence may be relevant. They suggested that such corporations have more "chunking", "breaking up of things into manageable units", than their less successful competitors. Coleman concluded that this phenomenon is represented in the school context by small school and district size. "It seems likely that relatively low unit sizes make it easier to create and sustain a positive district ethos...Ironically, the history of the administration of education in British Columbia is largely the record of successive waves of amalgamation of school districts."

School Size and Quality, Part 3; Modernizing the Little Red Schoolhouse Prior to the Goodlad and Coleman work, there had long been discussion concerning the reorganization of schools so as to better meet the learning needs of each individual student. Much of this has assumed that better use of technology, as well as better organization of staff and student time related to such technology, will foster such development. Progress has been slow although encouraging.

Now, however there is reason to be optimistic that much faster progress is ahead and that the development of improved man-machine systems of education will greatly improve individualization of instruction in smaller educational units. The evidence is mounting that such small units will be at least as efficient and offer just as broad curricula as the larger units now typical. In addition they will lessen our need for as many specialized teachers in favor of a larger proportion of generalists, and will expand the professionalism of our teachers while offering them the possibility of greater economic rewards.

Leggett et al. (1970) proposed a new model for American high schools. They suggested high schools of 250 students. They called their model school Smallway. It was designed not for rural schools but for all kinds of communities based on their belief that it would better meet the needs of all students for instruction aimed at their individual needs and interests. They estimated the cost to be comparable to traditional larger high schools. Smallway made use of non-graded classes, community volunteers, peer tutoring, independent study, flexible scheduling, and uncommitted time. It was not especially capital intensive except in the sense that it involved a librarian and a presumably rather large and comprehensive library which made use of exchanges of books and materials from other libraries.

Willet, (1973) studied whether the knowledge is available for education to improve its effectiveness by adopting capital-intensive methods as has been done so successfully by many other institutions and organizations since the industrial revolution.

He found much evidence that new capital-intensive man-machine systems of education could be superior to present labor-intensive methods. He also concluded that such methods would result in smaller educational units and would yield the additional benefits of (1) individualizing instruction, (2) harnessing much now wasted student energy into a learning situation which would minimize student alienation[a], and (3) permitting greater community control over, and interaction with, the education process.

Willet, Swanson, and Nelson, (1979), outlined a management system to enable schools to organize human and other resources so as to provide education both more flexible and more individualized than is now available.

They called these schools Learning Centers to emphasize how different they would be in organization and structure from the schools to which we are accustomed. These Learning Centers, they suggested, would serve in a single facility some 800 to 1200 pupils of the ages now included in grades K-12.

[a] Husen, (1979, 13-18) found that alienation is increasing throughout Western Europe and North America and increases the longer youth are in school. Alienation was not found in the developing nations where mass methods are still appropriate.

However, the centers would be ungraded and characterized by man-machine systems of organization with a generalist professional staff, independent study, community interaction, peer and cross-age tutoring, and flexible scheduling. The key words to describe the centers would be individualization of instruction. The 800 to 1200 pupil size was suggested because it was felt to be efficient and not because it was intended for small school districts. (Fifty five percent of American school districts in 1983 had 999 students or less.)

The book's cover picture of a one room "little red schoolhouse" was intended to illustrate their view that the assumptions of mass education which have dominated school organizational structure in this century are no longer either necessary or appropriate, and that the kind of school needed will include many of the characteristics of the little red schoolhouse, where each student's education was individualized.

The new Learning Centers envisioned by Willet, Swanson and Nelson, while they would be capital-intensive, would not use the old industrial concepts of standardization and large scale to deliver "mass instruction" to classroom size groups. Teaching roles would emphasize diagnosis of learning needs, prescription of learning experiences, motivation of students, and evaluation of results.

The direct transmission of knowledge would increasingly be carried out through television, videodisks, computers and software, and information retrieval systems in addition to textbooks, workbooks, and libraries.

They suggested that the next step needed was the development, using state and federal funds, of working models of such learning centers, and felt that only a few million dollars should be enough to design the first such models. Such projects are still needed and should be a research priority of rural schools.

While the present author is unaware of any developmental projects explicitly aimed at the Willet, Swanson and Nelson model, all of us at this conference are aware of recent progress along the general lines they advocated. See Office of Technology Assessment (1982). The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory has also reported on innovative practices in small high schools. Rural schools have long seen increased use of technology as an important element in their ability to maximize their advantages and minimize their asserted disadvantages based on the teacher-teaching-a-whole-class organizational structure.Such projects should be included in any federal and state appropriations aimed at increasing the use of technology in schools.

Having discussed research as to the relationships between school size and school quality, we now go on to discuss present state policies relating to small schools and school districts.

Sparsity Aid One direct way of dealing with the fiscal problems of small school size, in this case the problem of the added costs per pupil brought about by small education units, is to provide extra aid based on such costs. Such aid has come to be called sparsity aid.

Sparsity aid is of crucial importance to those who need it. This paper suggests the next generation is likely to see major changes in education that will make it possible for all but the very smallest schools to be equal in quality and diversity to larger ones. But such a view of the future does not obviate the need for sparsity aid in the present. Without it, small poor rural schools and their students will be irreparably harmed. Present lack of agreement as to just how much such aid should be provided in specific cases should not be allowed to prevent practical agreements in each state as to the cases where such aid is needed.

States must accept fiscal responsibility for assuring that the services provided in small schools are fully adequate to assure meeting all educational requirements and standards.

Wright (1981) surveyed all chief staff school officers to gather information on their arrangements for sparsity aid to small or isolated schools. Twenty four states reported such programs. In nearly all of them (and a few others have apparently been added since 1981) small enrollments are the key factor in determining eligibility. The great diversity of provisions suggests that there is not a firm knowledge base as to the relations between size, programs, and costs. In view of this, states have had to deal on an ad hoc basis with these needs.

This is one of the areas where a greatly improved data base is needed in order to make more strongly the case for the immediate fiscal and program needs of small schools. Meanwhile sparsity aid must continue to be provided on an ad hoc state-by-state basis. Such aid involves only a very small, almost minimal portion of total state school aid. But it is of crucial importance to those who need it. The states must be willing to share in the higher costs of small schools.

School district consolidation Sher (1977) has referred to school district consolidation as "the most successfully implemented educational policy of the last fifty years" despite the fact that it was based in part on certain untested assumptions and myths and that insufficient attention was given to alternatives that might have been more effective in a number of locations.

However one may feel about the implementation of consolidation policies in any given state, it now appears that reducing the number of school districts has about run its course and, in the words of Augenblick and Nachtigal, (1985) "any additional reductions are likely to be small, therefore limiting the traditional consolidation strategy as a way of addressing the equity problem in rural schools." Researchers are increasingly recommending a number of alternatives to consolidation for dealing with the problems of small and isolated schools.

The basic assumption of consolidation policies is that larger districts are both more economical and more effective than smaller ones. Swanson and Others, (1978) did a comprehensive review of the many studies of economies and diseconomies of scale in public education. They reported that "conclusions from such studies have taken a dramatic turn in recent years. From the turn of the century through the 60's, the overwhelming evidence seemed to support large school districts. As researchers have begun to take into account total cost and socioeconomic status of students and to include additional criteria ...economies of scale appear to evaporate at very low numbers of pupils and diseconomies of scale become readily apparent."

The researchers felt that through newly emerging education methods and procedures, "there appears to be a genuine option emerging which would eliminate any relationship between district size and school quality. This option is the individualization of instruction."

Swanson and Others' review was a chapter in a study of New York State policy on school district organization. They were concerned whether the state should continue its policy of providing strong incentives to school district reorganization under a fixed single plan. Hence they also reported research findings which questioned the efficiency criteria used in most prior research. "It is quite conceivable..that quality of education..might better be measured by an entirely different aspect of the learning environment than the size of the school or the number of courses listed. It more likely lies in the quality of the interactions between teacher and student and the flexibility governing that relationship."

Monk and Haller, (1986), conducted a later New York State study relating to the state's policies toward small rural schools. The authors concluded that New York's policies on school district reorganization have serious deficiencies and that the now available alternatives to reorganization in the state are similarly flawed. They recommended that state policy should enable small districts to "give unbiased consideration" to traditional reorganization as now embodied in state law, but that the state should also provide additional alternatives and support them fiscally, and that it should "become more tolerant of accept greater responsibility for the costs of expanding educational opportunities in small rural districts."

The Monk-Haller study included a number of new studies of rural schools and of the histories of individual school reorganizations in New York. Based on these findings, they further departed from the previous thinking that "bigger is better" and that the state offer a single "take it or leave it" reorganization plan. They stressed the importance of balance and flexibility in state policy. They asserted that the idea that there is an optimal school size is a myth that has played much havoc in New York and other states, and suggested that new alternatives should be made available.

These included new voting procedures and allowable agreements among districts considering merger and a broad new set of alternatives to merger as that term is now defined. Also recommended were increased state support for direct contractual arrangements among districts including state supported cooperative development proposals, "necessity aid" for all small high schools and expanded categorical aids to address problems common, but not unique, to rural districts. Such categorical programs would include development of improved software and other improved and expanded use of technology.

Such proposals for more targeted use of aid, including aid for development proposals and related categorical grants, are an emerging trend nationally as states look more directly for desired educational results and for solutions to specific problems rather than merely for wealth-equalized distribution of general reimbursement aid. It is entirely appropriate that this trend should include explicit consideration of problems unique or common to rural districts, but it will be up to rural educators to make it so. A key need will be for improved data to make the case as to what is required and its cost.

Regional Service Agencies Such agencies have proven many times over their ability to provide services on a regional basis which would be difficult or impossible to provide locally. While the nature of such services continually changes, the agencies have shown themselves flexible enough to adapt. For example, the growth in the capacities of microcomputers has made possible locally some services such as accounting and simple tutorial programs that formerly required larger computers in RSAs. Such adaptation must be carefully built in to the structure of RSAs. It is important that state fiscal policies should not encourage districts to use any but the most efficient services simply because of RSA aid formulas.

A major need now being addressed by many RSAs and needing great expansion is the development of expanded communication methods, especially interactive ones in regional networks.

RSAs can also play a vital role in the "cost accounting" research suggested in this paper. They should be more strongly encouraged in federal law to participate actively in programs where their help would be valuable.

Technology Encouraging and assisting the use of technology (often through regional service agencies), has long been a policy of many states in dealing with the problems of small schools. There have been uses of communications media (radio, television) to enable a teacher to deal interactively with students separated by miles, to using recording and information storage devices to enable students one at a time to use teaching materials (programmed instruction, films, television tapes), to the use of computer software for more complex and interactive programs of instruction. Progress has been made on each of these. Not as apparent, but moving along nevertheless has been the "technology" of combining these devices with direct human interactions to deal with individual differences and needs.

The section of this paper on School Size and Quality has dealt at length with technology related research and trends. This paper suggests that further work along these lines offers great promise, not only for small rural schools who might be its most immediate beneficiaries, but for all schools. Seeking and using funds for such work should be a high priority. We now pass on to a number of other matters related to the financing of rural schools.

DATA NEEDS

Augenblick and Nachtigal (1983) did an analysis of issues and recent trends relating to Equity in Rural School Finance. A principal conclusion was:

> "Lacking a workable taxonomy which can accommodate the variations in rural reality, there is neither the information to accurately assess the adequacy of educational programs in small rural schools nor the ability to judge the capacity of rural communities to support an adequate educational program. Given this lack of information and the inability of the rural constituency to coalesce into a viable political force, rural education has received little if any special attention from the past school finance reform initiatives..."Until we can assembly a data base on the real educational needs of rural communities and their ability to support those programs, the debate about equity of rural school finance can only proceed at the emotional, political level."

This study clearly outlined the kinds of data needed and pointed out that federal agencies could do much of the job if assigned as part of their regular duties.

In recent state constitutional cases concerning school finance formulas, there is increasing concern with the costs of actually providing programs of a given standard, as compared to earlier cases where average costs, wealth, spending and the like tended to receive more emphasis. Work done in New Hampshire in connection with its court case on the constitutionality of its aid formula is an example of what might be done elsewhere without incurring high costs. While not necessarily undertaken with a rural education emphasis, such studies have great promise for rural schools nevertheless. The New Hampshire study was based on sample data from comparable size districts of different wealth. They provide interesting clues for further research, including research sponsored by thelfederal government, looking at comparable wealth districts of different size. A major advantage of such studies is that they can be done with relatively small samples at low cost.

The Midcontinent Regional Education Laboratory (McREL, 1986) is assembling an eight state data base on school finance variables, classifying districts in ways which will be of great help in documenting rural needs. The data base will be continued over the years, providing increasingly useful trend data. Such projects are well worth study and expansion or replication by other states or regions.

RURAL MINORITY POPULATIONS

It is a serious mistake to associate minority populations only with the big cities. An important part of them live in rural areas, especially in the South and Southwest.

Fratoe studied the educational status and needs of Blacks (1980) and Hispanics (1981) living in nonmetropolitan areas. His findings were strikingly disturbing. They point up the extent to which the educational and other problems of Blacks and Hispanics are rural in nature and to which these problems and problems of rural economic stagnation and decline are interrelated.

In 1977, only 31.5 percent of all nonmetro black males had completed High School, compared to 47.9 percent of central city blacks and 60.1 percent for nonmetro white males. The functional illiteracy rate of nonmetro blacks was nearly three times that of nonmetro blacks and five times that of nonmetro whites.

In 1979, only 35.5 percent of nonmetro Hispanic males 25 years and over had finished high school, compared with 73.9 percent for metro whites, 63.4 percent for nonmetro whites, and 43.5 percent for metro Hispanics. The 1979 functional illiteracy rates for nonmetro Hispanics was about 8 times that of nonmetro whites and 11 times that of metro whites. In 1978, 36 percent of nonmetro Hispanic 16 to 24 year olds were school dropouts, nearly twice the figure for nonmetro whites.

Ninety one percent of the nation's 6.4 million nonmetro Blacks live in the South, where their unemployment rate was 10.0 percent compared to 6.3 percent for nonmetro whites.

Among the five Southwestern states where most nonmetro Hispanics lived, no state served even two thirds of its limited and non-English speaking public school students enrolled in special language programs, and only California served half of them.

Nonmetro Hispanics held fewer white collar jobs than either metro or nonmetro whites or than metro Hispanics. The same was true of nonmetro Blacks, as compared to whites or metro Hispanics. Only 15 percent of all Hispanic farm workers 25 years old and over had more than an elementary school education, compared with three fourths of their white counterparts.

Fratoe's data dispelled the myths that nonmetro Hispanics are predominantly migratory farm workers, and that Southern nonmetro Blacks are mostly farm laborers. Most nonmetro Hispanics and Blacks worked in nonfarm occupations, mostly in blue collar and service jobs. Only 10.1 percent of nonmetro black males and 13.4 per cent of nommetro Hispanic males were farm laborers. Both in farm and nonfarm occupations low levels of educational attainment blocked Hispanics and Blacks from advancement to better jobs and incomes.

Fratoe drew implications regarding nonmetro regional and community economic development which are most relevant to this conference, and which apply not only to non-metro minorities but to many other rural dwellers as well.

> "Educational improvements alone, even those directed toward the work sector, cannot be undertaken without regard to nonmetro economic and human resource development. Merely providing better educational resources ...will neither increase the quantity nor quality of work opportunities available. In short, they require more jobs which utilize higher skill levels. Nonmetro economic growth emphasizing industrial and business expansion can create jobs by enhancing the economic base of local communities. As the economy becomes more diversified, there are more options for workers in new labor markets...Without a well trained labor force, nonmetro developments beneficial to [minorities] cannot proceed. Conversely, lacking nonmetro development, the relative educational status of nonmetro [minorities] may remain low."

These finding were found by Fratoe to have important policy implications. He suggested that teacher training should include insights into factors determining Black and Hispanic student beliefs, interests, and values and in means of most appropriately aiding minority students in the classroom. He made numerous other suggestions regarding education-work programs, working with the parents of school pupils, special language programs, and other needs. While all of these needs have obvious implications for state policy, substantial increases in federal assistance are also required. The scale of this problem is such that it can be fully met only with the use of federal resources. Possible programs include special programs aimed at these target populations and expansion of Chapter 1 programs aimed at nonmetro poverty, together with expanded technical assistance to rural districts to enable them to obtain all appropriate aid.

Future research needs include improved federal census and research data concerning these problems and improved information on needed program costs and benefits. While such research will help make stronger the case for expanded programs, the case is already a strong one and action is sorely needed.

Coalitions Like many of the needs discussed on the following pages, those related to high populations of low educated minorities are not unique to rural schools. While there are certain aspects specific to rural areas, it is not only a rural problem. It is shared by many large cities and some poor suburbs. Legislation to deal with it, whether state or federal, is not rural legislation but general legislation.

The best hope for action on such problems may come from formation of coalitions with all those concerned. For example, improved annual appropriations for Chapter 1 or for state programs which provide categorical aids or pupil weightings for remedial education services might best be supported by such coalitions.

Many problems of poverty, low incomes, inequities in state aid formulas, needed services for special populations, vocational training, teacher recruiting, etc. are shared with nonrural districts. A central task of rural educators is to seek out coalitions with those who share some of their problems and interests.

FISCAL EQUITY, AID FORMULAS

It is of great importance to note that state school finance equalization plans are and for the foreseeable future will continue to provide the fundamental and basic economic support of public schools. Therefore, rural educators must realize that state-by-state work is crucial and fundamental to their needs.

While the importance of state-by-state research and legislative action cannot be overemphasized, state-specific recommendations are inappropriate for this paper. Since each state's situation is unique, this paper will comment only on a few matters relating to equalization formulas that might apply to a number of states and perhaps to some federal programs..

Use of Personal Income in Wealth Measurement A number of researchers have found that district fiscal ability is clearly related to personal income, and that using personal income as well as property valuation in wealth measures improves the equity of aid formulas. Most rural communities have low income and many of them, because of the capital intensive nature of such industries as agriculture or mining, appear wealthy on measures based on taxable valuation.

Although there is a trend to include personal income in state aid formulas, and while it is included in a number of federal distribution formulas, most states still do not include it in their wealth measures.

While every state is unique, it is suggested that rural interests in any state not using income data in its aid formula should explore this possibility. Also, states can use income data in state formulas to distribute federal grants to school districts.

Use of Old Data vs. Current or More Recent Data in Aid Formulas Use of old data rather than current data in state aid formulas always has an inequitable effect. The older the data the worse the effect. If, relative to the state average, a district is getting poorer from year to year or if its educational needs or enrollment are increasing it should annually be getting more aid. On the other hand, if it is getting wealthier or is experiencing a decline in its educational needs, its aid should be going down from year to year. In either case, use of lagged data has an inequitable effect, the increasingly needy district gets less than it needs while the increasingly able district gets more. With the rapid ups and downs of rural economies in some states in recent years these effects have been especially severe and have deprived districts of needed aid just when it was needed most.

While this problem applies to all kinds of state aid formulas, it is especially severe in those cases where aid is proportional to the districts' levels of spending or tax effort as under guaranteed tax base formulas. In such cases the formula supposedly provides an incentive to spend or tax more in order to get more aid, but data lag makes the incentive ineffective or nonexistent.

For example, assume (a) a poor rural district entitled to a seventy percent state share of its aidable costs under a state formula based on two year old data on its tax rate or expenditure , and (b) an average spending increase in the state of ten percent per pupil per year and (c) that this poor district budgets to keep up with the average growth.

If aid were paid on the basis of current year tax or spending data, (that is, if aid reflects the same annual budget that is being aided), the district would receive aid of 70 percent of its budget. But if two year old data is used the twenty percent increase in the ensuing two years falls entirely on the local tax rate. Instead of paying its fair local share of 30 percent (30/100) of the budget, the district must pay 41.7 percent (50/120) of its budget from local taxes. Thus its local tax rate is 39 percent higher than the "fair share" presumed by the formula. For a poorer district than this, the situation would be even worse.

In many states there is a two or three year data lag on tax rates and expenditures. Paying aid there based on current year data might involve using estimates during the current year and readjusting aid in the following year.

This might involve additional paperwork for the state and for the districts affected, although such districts would be the ones who would also get the most additional aid. Such a method reduces the accuracy of state budget estimates, and thus involves the possibility of slightly larger state surpluses or deficits from year to year. These are prices well worth paying for the greater equity that would result.

Greater Flexibility in Organizational Alternatives Sher (1976) and other writers on rural education have commented on inflexibility of many state's rules and fiscal incentives for school district consolidation or its alternatives. This topic was discussed earlier on page 12. Monk and Haller, (1986) for example, recommended greater flexibility for New York State small rural districts. Research evidence has been steadily accumulating that inflexible state rules have had unfortunate results in specific cases studied.

The general rule is to seek to have state laws give maximum consideration to local wishes and values, and take cognizance of the total interests of the local community rather than only the asserted efficiency of certain state subsidized education arrangements. Also, state incentives to interdistrict cooperation should not be so slanted toward one specific method, such as working through a Regional Service Agency rather than directly with another district, so that the incentive aid distorts the district decision in favor of the alternative with the lowest net cost after aid, rather than in favor of the alternative that is truly most efficient.

Economy and efficiency, like virtue, should be their own rewards. Instead many states now reward presumed economy and efficiency by paying extra aid to those who use rigidly prescribed organizational structures while not sharing at all in valid, perhaps superior, alternatives. Instead, new more flexible financial arrangements are needed which will enable districts to make their choices in an economically neutral environment where comparable state support is available for alternative choices.

Such flexibility will establish real-world laboratories where varying ideas can be tested out in practice. This will provide far better knowledge as to what really "works best" in varying situations. A state policy requiring rigorous evaluation of the options chosen would add greatly to future knowledge about such arrangements and should be urged by those seeking such flexibility.

We now turn to other matters relating to finance problems of rural schools. The discussion will center around two studies of federal policies.

Hearn (1981) proposed a set of planning and policy initiatives for the Department of Education in 1981 which are still appropriate. They dealt with proposals to eliminate the inequities and neglect that then (and now) characterized federal policy concerning rural schools.

After reviewing data on the degree of diversity, sparsity, low incomes, poverty, lack of educational attainment, and other problems of rural schools, he assembled the evidence that federal policies tend to discriminate against rural districts, that present formulas deprive them of a fair share of federal education funds, and that "density bias" tends to penalize them in the grant award process.

He made eight recommendations:

1. The Department of Education (ED) needs systematic, in-depth, program-by-program analysis of formula and criterion effects on rural and small LEAs.
2. An option of proposing legislation, revising regulations, and preparing policy guidelines to provide "set-asides" for rural LEAs should be explored.
3. Steps should be taken to increase communications with small and rural LEAs including measures to provide rural schools access to information on ED regulations, proposed legislation, grant announcements, R.F.P.'s and technical assistance.
4. Efforts should be made to reduce the disproportionate paperwork burden of federal programs on small and rural LEAs.
5. Efforts should be made to assure small and rural school participation in State and Federal technical assistance activities.
6. Efforts should be made to increase the quality and comprehensiveness of the data base on rural education.
7. Efforts should be made to identify and validate rural educational and school business practices.
8. ED should recommend legislation that would compensate with federal funds for the extra costs necessary to assure a quality education for rural children due to the special characteristics of rural schools. (Among the examples he cited were sparsity allowances, incentives for teacher recruiting and training, special grants for communications technology, grants to meet the special needs of rural minorities, and Migrant Education.

The National Seminar on Rural Education (Wallace, 1979), another comprehensive review of federal education policies, was held in 1979 under the joint sponsorship of several federal agencies, with the participation of some 72 different groups and agencies. After reviewing a series of papers concerning rural education problems and the failure of federal policies to deal with them adequately, participants approved a total of 23 recommendations calling for action to end neglect and discrimination against rural areas, provide special support for dealing with the unique problems of rural education, and recognize education as a critical component of any rural development strategy.

To this reviewer the recommendations are equally as appropriate today as they were then. They were divided into five major areas. The first was "Equity and Equality for Rural Education", including eliminating antirural bias in federal grant programs, initiating programs for special populations in rural areas, enhancing local initiatives with special grants, and a Rural Education Act. (Density bias" is not only a federal level problem, nor is the need for programs aimed at special populations. State action is also appropriate.)

The second area was "Linking Rural Development and Rural Education", which included recommendations aimed at enhancing local initiative and concerning investigation of experiments in other countries to link rural education and rural development. The emphasis on this topic at the present conference perhaps reflects that this aspect of improving rural education and rural life through greatly increased economic development activities is one of the areas of concern that has grown most since 1979. Because this important matter will be treated separately at this conference, it is touched upon only briefly in this paper.

The third area of recommendations concerned "Delivery of Services to Rural Education", which included special rural training programs and incentives, efforts to expand the use of technology, and support of the use of educational service agencies in federal program initiatives and other research and improvement efforts focused on rural schools.

The fourth area was "Data Collection and Research", which included a plea for more comprehensive and detailed data from the National Center for Education Statistics and other agencies to allow greatly expanded analysis of curricula, program offerings, staff qualifications and limitations, school costs broken down by appropriate categories, distribution of federal grants by type of community and school districts served, and information about educational needs. All such information, the conference recommended, should be based on samples of sufficient size to permit disaggregation by race, sex, region, district and school size, population density, and types and degrees of rurality. They also called for support of expanded research on rural education.

This data collection recommendation is a crucial one touched upon by a number of the researchers cited in this paper. Like most of the others, it has found a tragic failure of acceptance by the federal government. It should surely be a high priority matter of continuing effort by rural educators interested in fiscal equity because such information is basic to demonstrating rural needs and strengthening the case for new programs. This paper has also pointed out that projects within or among states can also be very helpful.

The final area of recommendations was "Vocational and Career Training in Rural Areas", which included recommendations concerning coordination of federal training programs for rural youth and adults, guidance and counseling materials specific to the needs of rural learners, demonstration projects concerning rural vocational education delivery systems and program designs, and programs aimed at the needs of rural women who are entering or reentering the labor market.

Rural educators may be conscious of a great sense of frustration as they review these two sets of recommendations for changes in federal policy and the lack of progress toward substantially all of them. One is reminded that the best time to help establish a new national agenda is during a presidential election campaign, especially one that is sure to result in a new administration and new national priorities and goals. Surely such a time is one where rural educators should expend extra energy and resources to have their voices heard and their needs recognized.

Any review of federal policies must recognize that the budget deficit will have a great effect on federal leeway for new expenditures. Among the most affordable of those listed above would be elimination of anti-rural bias and improved data collection. Choices among the others in setting action priorities will depend in part on fiscal prospects.

SUMMARY - SUGGESTED PRIORITIES

The central task of this paper was to suggest for discussion by the Rural Education Research Forum some suggested priorities relating to financing rural education. Many research suggestions have been made in the paper. The following priorities are suggested. They are not listed in any particular order.

Suggested Research Priorities

1. Develop improved data bases for the analysis of rural district fiscal problems and needs. Such data bases should deal with information relating to school program offerings and curricula, district fiscal ability including personal income data and data by classes of real property, pupil and program needs, and the costs of providing needed programs.

   Much such data could most efficiently be collected by federal agencies, but state-specific data collection by states or interstate agencies can also be helpful and should be encouraged.

   State Education Departments should have full time personnel devoted to collecting and analyzing data as to the equity and effectiveness of state aid formulas.

2. Seek improved and expanded state and federal aid for school program development and research projects aimed at using man-machine systems most efficiently to individualize instruction.

3. Seek improved and expanded state and federal aid for development of educational software and its testing and evaluation, together with teacher training in its use.

SUGGESTED ACTION PRIORITIES

The author wishes also to suggest for Forum discussion some priorities for political and legislative action. They are as follows.

1. Do all possible to bring rural education needs onto the national agenda during the current presidential campaign and in the accompanying and following state campaigns.

2. Work in each appropriate state and at the national level to enact improved legislation related to
   - sparsity aid
   - density bias
   - organizational flexibility
   - expanded use of technology with emphasis on regional
   - communications networks and information banks

3. - Seek through formation of appropriate coalitions to enact needed state and federal legislation relating to
   - equity of aid formulas in measuring district ability and pupil needs
   - use of personal income in measuring district fiscal capacity
   - use of current or more nearly current data in aid calculations
   - use of technology including purchase of equipment and software, teacher training, and evaluative studies.

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Robert Lamitie has had a long interest in rural school finance. He has held a variety of teaching and administrative positions in Maine, Massachusetts, and New York including with a New York Board of Cooperative Educational Services. He has served as an Assistant Commissioner of Education in New York and an Associate Commissioner in Connecticut, in both of which positions he worked with school finance formulas. He is now a consultant on school finance and related matters.

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A RESPONSE TO ROBERT E. LAMITIE'S PAPER: RESEARCH AND ACTION NEEDS IN RURAL SCHOOL FINANCE

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Prepared for the National Rural Education Research Forum
Lake Placid, New York
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Abstract

In this reaction paper, we begin with some cautionary comments regarding Lamitie's analysis of the relationship between district size and quality. We then discuss the implications of his argument that quality could become independent of size if rural districts capitalized on the advantages of their "smallness." We examine this argument within the context of current educational reform movements; specifically, we focus on three trends. The first is an extension of the effective schools research into rural settings; the second is the quest for improved teacher and administrative qualifications; while the third is a reconceptualization of school district consolidation that expands the administrative unit without eliminating the advantages of school based decision-making.

A Response to R. E. Lamitie's Research and Action Needs in Rural School Finance

Austin D. Swanson and Stephen L. Jacobson

We would like to preface our response to the Lamitie paper by noting that there is little in Lamitie's work with which we wish to quarrel and much with which we agree. We appreciate Lamitie's specifying the merits of small schools and the potential disadvantages of large schools. His emphasis on the individualization of instruction is in keeping with the best of pedagogical thought and his assessment that advances in educational technology will reduce the issue of economies of scale to naught is correct according to our thinking. His recommendations of research and action priorities are both reasonable and timely.

We should also add that our remarks, like those of Lamitie's, address broad issues which pertain to the research and action needs of rural schools; we make no attempt to offer specific recommendations for funding. A discussion of categorical funding can be found in Monk's response to Lamitie's paper.

In this reaction paper, we begin with some cautionary comments regarding Lamitie's analysis of the relationship between district size and quality. We then discuss the implications of his argument that quality could become independent of size if rural districts capitalized on the advantages of their "smallness." We examine this argument within the context of current educational reform movements; specifically, we focus on three trends. The first is an extension of the effective schools research into rural settings; the second is the quest for improved teacher and administrative qualifications; while the third is a reconceptualization of school district consolidation that expands the administrative unit without eliminating the advantages of school based decision-making.

School Size, District Size and Effective Rural Schools

School Versus District Size

In Part 1 of School Size and Quality, Lamitie uses Goodlad's (1983) influential study, A Place Called School as the basis for his argument that there are advantages to "smallness" upon which rural schools should capitalize (see, for example, the five findings reported on pp. 2-3). Although we agree with Lamitie's fundamental premise, i.e., small unit size offers opportunities which can be used to greater advantage, it is important to note that the unit of analysis upon which his argument rests is the school building and not the school district. While this may be a moot point in those rural districts where the building *is* the district, the importance of the distinction is that whatever advantages smallness allows are potentially available to all districts and not just rural ones. One could use this same argument to suggest that urban districts disaggregate their less effective schools into smaller, more manageable units. This point is, in fact, suggested at the end of Part 2 of the School Size and Quality section (p. 5), when Lamitie cites Peters' and Waterman's finding that unusually effective corporations were characterized by more "chunking" than their less successful competitors. Indeed, if size alone were the overriding factor in school success, then whatever need rural districts have for additional sparcity aid would pale beside the need to finance the "chunking" of large urban districts, since the potential value of small schools is well established, while the value of small districts is not.

But size alone cannot explain why some school districts are more efficient than others in translating modest levels of per pupil expenditures into high levels of student achievement. In his review of policy research in school efficiency, Lamitie draws heavily on Coleman's (1986) study, in which Coleman introduces a concept called "district ethos" to suggest the existence of a set of share beliefs and accepted norms and practices that pervade an effective work site. Although Lamitie mentions Coleman's contention that district ethos may be an important predictor of the relationship between expenditures and achievement, he fails to discuss Coleman's belief that administrative leadership may be the most significant factor in forging positive district norms.

> This component has emerged from virtually all the effective school studies as critical, even when the initial expectations did not include it as a factor. Any consideration of school district processes necessarily must include leadership as a primary linking mechanism. (p. 93)

Although Coleman found district size to be the most interesting issue to emerge from his initial statistical analysis, the significant associations between size and student achievement disappeared when he subsequently controlled for Family Educational Level, an unalterable variable for school administrators.

Since neither district nor school size were significantly associated with student achievement, Coleman concluded that his analyses do not allow assertions such as "smaller is better." Although rural school advocates are often tempted to counter the "bigger is better" argument with just this response, the only inference about the relationship between size and quality that can appropriately be drawn from the data is that "the unusually successful districts are rather small." Which brings us to the first of the recent educational trends we would like to endorse, i.e., the extension of effective schools research into rural settings.

Effective Rural Schools

In her review of the effective schools literature, Rosenholtz (1985) argued that the factors which distinguish effective schools may be "conditionalized by the characteristics of the clientele served." She cautioned that the racial homogeneity and low socio-economic status of the inner-city sites where effective schools have been studied may preclude generalizing findings to other settings. But, as Lamitie points out, these clientele characteristics do not exist only in urban communities. An important priority in rural education research is, therefore, to extend the examination of effective schools to rural districts.

For example, the effective schools literature indicates that the building principal is the pivotal figure in the success of inner-city schools. Since the role of the superintendent in a small rural district incorporates many of the same responsibilities as a building principal in an urban district, then the rural superintendent may be the pivotal figure in producing effective rural schools. Recall Coleman's contention that administrative leadership may be a significant factor in forging positive district norms. Research in rural districts by Reed (1985) and Jacobson (1986) support this contention.

Of the top five research priorities reported in the Rural Education Association Research Agenda Report (1986), three specifically addressed the desire of school leaders to have successful strategies, practices and characteristics of effective rural schools identified. There is a clear need to provide models of success that rural schools may emulate.

A Reconceptualization of School District Consolidation

A couple of conclusions we draw from the above is that the quality of educational leadership is closely linked to school effectiveness and that the potential value of small schools is well established, but the value of small districts is not. In this section, we address the issue of governance structures capable of facilitating the exercise of competent educational leadership while protecting the meritorious characteristics inherent in "smallness."

Improving Professional Qualifications

The success of rural schools documented by Lamitie is even more remarkable when one considers that we have a relatively poorly qualified professional cadre dealing with children from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Teachers and administrators are likely to be less experienced and have less professional training. More teachers are likely to be teaching outside their certification areas and there is likely to be more teacher and administrative turnover in small school districts than in larger ones. One cannot help wonder what rural schools could accomplish if, for example, they could attract and retain professional staffs of the caliber found in the most affluent suburbs.

Reflecting on the districts that comprise his predominantly rural region, one regional superintendent noted in a case study by Jacobson (1986),

> They have had a very heavy turn-over of superintendents. One reason is that they are never willing to pay enough to attract decent candidates. Another reason is, who wants to go to that size school, that isolated, where you run the risk of being buried professionally. If there was a decent superintendent and he got the opportunity to move, he moved right away. Or, if they couldn't attract a good person, they'd hire a guidance counselor who had certification, but no experience and they'd just fail.

On average, rural teachers and administrators hold poorer qualifications than professional educators elsewhere, at a time when serious questions are being raised about the qualitative adequacy of the nation's teaching profession in general. Proposals for upgrading the profession have included raising salaries and enhancing the conditions of employment through such mechanisms as career ladders and teacher empowerment. The concern should be especially acute in rural areas where wages are notoriously low, work loads are particularly onerous, especially in terms of numbers of preparations, and where the only road to advancement is to seek employment elsewhere. Rural schools traditionally have been the training grounds for suburban and small city schools. The better professionals all too often move on to "greener pastures" and the poorer ones stay and stay and stay and become more and more expensive given the structure of the single salary schedule.

Low pay arises in part from the economic constraints faced by many rural communities and in part from the low wage scales for all occupations prevailing in rural areas. Viable career ladders are not possible in districts where there may be only one or two administrative or supervisory positions in toto. Teacher empowerment is a possibility—if there is any desire for such given the heavy workload.

School Based Decision-Making

School based decision-making is what rural schools are all about. Most rural districts have only one or two schools and local citizens are actively involved in school governance and school activities. Rural communities identify with their schools and the schools identify with their communities. Now, educational researchers and policy analysts are saying that this is a good thing and that all schools should be so organized--even in the largest cities. But such was not always the case. In his history of American education, Tyack (1974) writes:

> [The] movement to take control of the rural common school away from the community and turn it over to the professionals was part of a more general organizational revolution in American education in which laymen lost much of their direct control over the schools. In the cities schoolmen pioneered new bureaucratic patterns of educational organizations. They sought to "free education from politics" by coercing rural communities to consolidate schools...
>
> But [rural] patrons continued to resist consolidation and standardizations in a battle which made little sense to most educators. Country people may have been dissatisfied with their

> school buildings and with an archaic curriculum, but they wanted to control their own schools. (p. 25)

We quote Tyack, not to suggest that lay control should dominate professional expertise, but, rather to propose that both need to be respected if we are to realize a state of the art in educational systems which is suited to the unique needs of the clientele they serve.

A New View of District Consolidation

The research on size has had two foci: the district and the school. For very small districts, these are one and the same thing. Large districts have a choice, however; they may operate schools over a wide range of sizes. Thus, a large district may operate small schools as a matter of district policy, though most do not. In the past school district consolidation has been pursued primarily to enhance the school curriculum, especially at the secondary level. The price has been loss of community control and a large impersonal school. There are other good reasons for district consolidation, however. Among them include, a more comprehensive--or cosmopolitan--perspectives among district leadership, a broader financial base, greater staffing flexibility permitting the implementation of a career ladder concept and administrative rotation, improved opportunities for district sponsored in-service training and more efficient provision of technological and business support services.

While acknowledging the advantages to smallness, we need also to acknowledge the disadvantages. In emphasizing the goodness of smallness, Lamitie chose to cite Coleman (1986), Goodlad (1984) and Lightfoot (1983). We have already pointed to Coleman's equivocation on the size issue. Goodlad (1984) also noted the trade-off between small schools and large schools.

> Clearly we need sustained, creative efforts designed to show the curricular deficits incurred in very small high schools, the curricular possibilities of larger high schools, and the point where increased size suggests no curricular gain. (p. 30)

We are more comfortable with the position of Boyer (1983) in his equally influential study for the Carnegie Foundation, High School. Boyer acknowledges that small schools provide greater opportunity for student participation and greater emotional support than larger ones. But he goes on to raise the question:

> Can a small school provide the educational opportunities to match the social and emotional advantages that may accompany smallness? We believe the preferred arrangement is to have bigness and smallness—a broad educational program with supportive social arrangements. (p. 235)

Lamitie suggests that much of the curricular deficits of small schools can now be made up through educational technology. We agree; but we hasten to point out that the technology required to do so cannot be amassed by a small district in a cost effective manner. The technical and support infrastructure must be provided by the state and intermediate school districts.

If we would combine the concepts of school based decision-making with school district consolidation, we could realize the best of both worlds. School district consolidation would no longer necessarily mean the closing or reorganizing of schools. Consolidation would pertain to the financial, personnel, technical and business support systems.

Matters of curriculum, school organization and personnel selection could still reside at the school (community) level determined by the staff or a representative school board as appropriate. Given modern conditions (and assuming a substantial measure of school discretion), no school district should be smaller than a county—even in major metropolitan areas. The present intermediate districts are possible precursors of the school district of the future.

There are precedents for such an organizational pattern—though to our knowledge, not in the United States. The English pattern is a case in point. England has a national educational system, locally administered. Traditionally, there has been a great deal of discretion left to school authorities—especially the school head (principal), far beyond anything known in the United States. In recent years, to enhance community and parental input, each school has been required to create a Board of Governors representing these groups. The Boards also may have representatives from the school staff. The school heads are the executive officers of the Boards much as our superintendents serve as the executive officers of our Boards of Education. The Boards of Governors are involved with curriculum, school organization and personnel selection as proposed above.

Another example is that of Australia. Schools are operated directly by the state in Australia; there is no comparable unit to our school district. With such a strong degree of centralization, there has been a great deal of apathy toward the schools by both parents and the profession. School quality has suffered. To counter this, a number of the states have required the establishment of School Councils representing the community, parents and staff. The exact arrangement varies from state to state; but, in general, the Councils have similar powers to those proposed above.

In conclusion, it is our belief that small is beautiful, but small can be beautiful only as long as it is significantly linked to the society which sustains it. There is a need for community expression and identification, but there is also the reality that none can survive alone, isolated from the larger social milieu. Rural schools have done remarkably well when compared to a badly flawed national system of public education. As reforms are made in the national system, rural schools are poorly positioned to participate in them. The new view of school district consolidation we have proposed combined with substantial discretion left for decision-making at the school level could set the pattern of educational governance which would lead to educational excellence for rural schools in the twenty-first century. It maintains the social support structures of small schools and a wholesome amount of community participation to set specific school policy while expanding the financial base, allowing much greater flexibility in personnel policies, permitting economies of scale for technological and business support services and allowing for a broader perspective among the leadership setting general district parameters.

DeYoung (1987) in his review of rural education research characterizes the major battle in the rural school literature as forming around community control versus appropriate school size. Our proposal offers an alternative conceptualization which seeks to resolve this conflict.

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COMMENT ON ROBERT E. LAMITIE'S PAPER: RESEARCH AND ACTION NEEDS IN RURAL SCHOOL FINANCE

David H. Monk
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Prepared for the National Rural Education Research Forum
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Robert Lamitie has provided a useful and much needed overview of current research needs in rural school finance. He has correctly pointed out emerging trends and issues for the 1990's. In this comment I focus attention on "sparsity aid" and use this as an opportunity to make observations about trends in school finance toward more categorical forms of grants-in-aid.

Lamitie uses the term "sparsity aid" as an umbrella term to refer to all the various ways in which states provide additional general aid for small rural school districts. Historically, the most compelling reasons for providing these additional state revenues to small rural schools have been based on economy of size arguments. The gist of these arguments is that small schools and districts cost more to operate than do larger ones and that it is not always feasible or desirable to reorganize these schools and districts into larger administrative units.

But, as Lamitie puts it, "There is a chance that school quality and curriculum diversity may become independent of school size . . ." The key point here is that thanks to things like instructional technologies and state requirements for students to enroll in heretofore elective courses, diseconomies of small size are likely to become less and less important in the future. What this means is that the traditional rationale for extra general state aid is likely to be eroded. Moreover, as Lamitie works hard to demonstrate in the first part of his paper, recent research is questioning the magnitude of small size diseconomies even in the absence of technological innovations.

Thus, advocates of continued or additional state or federal revenues earmarked for small rural schools face the challenge of conceptualizing a new justification for such policy.[1] While this new justification has yet to emerge, I believe when it does it will have two characteristics. First it will lead to categorical rather than general forms of aid. Second, it will draw attention to problems that are common in but not unique to small rural schools. In what follows I provide examples of some promising forms of categorical aid that are likely to be consistent with the new conceptual orientation.

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[1] It is worth noting that in Lamitie's discussion of sparsity aid he sees it primarily as an aid necessary only during the transition to the period wherein size is independent of schooling costs.

One of the characteristics commonly associated with small rural schools is parochialism and relative homogeneity. A program of what might be called "diversity aid" could serve to break down this type of isolation and might be used to facilitate temporary transfers of teachers, students, and even administrators. An important point here is that rural schools are not the only schools to suffer from parochialism. This is a good example of a problem that is commonly found in but not unique to rural regions. The development of an accurate index of parochialism or homogeneity could facilitate formation of coalitions linking rural and, say, urban interests within a state.

Second, a program of aid designed to facilitate the development and utilization of specialized instructional technologies could be very helpful to small rural schools. Again this is an instance where the need is not unique to these schools. Even very large urban schools offer small specialized courses for which there is unlikely to be sufficient demand for a private market to operate.

Third, low levels of aspiration are often believed to be characteristic of small rural schools, but these are certainly not unique to these areas. Programs of aid designed to raise aspirations through the provision of timely information could help to address these problems in rural as well as suburban or urban areas. These programs would need to be adapted to local conditions. In rural areas, a program designed to share in the costs of supervised visits to distant college campuses could have impressive results, particularly if it were accompanied by upgraded guidance services.

Low aspiration levels can also be addressed through the expansion of viable educational opportunities. In New York State, for example, there is an on-going debate about establishing residential high schools of excellence. Many rural and other districts within New York have objected to this idea on the grounds that they would be forced to lose some of their most gifted students. But if the program were structured around periodic, perhaps one semester, periods of residence rather than an entire two or four year commitment, it is likely that local opposition would diminish. By making the commitment less extreme, the state would make the opportunity more viable and would simultaneously stimulate and allow students to realize higher aspirations.

Fourth, aid could be earmarked for the pre- and in-service training needs of teachers. Support could be provided to encourage the dual certification of teachers. Districts seeking the added flexibility dual certification offers could draw upon a state fund designed to promote this kind of training for existing faculty. For new recruits, in exchange for a promise to teach for some period in a small rural school, the state could share directly in the cost of training in particular combinations of fields. The identity of these combinations could be determined on the basis of needs assessments of school districts.

Fifth, programs could be established to overcome scheduling difficulties wherever they occur within a state. For example, teachers whose location or schedules prevent them from meeting regularly for planning purposes could be freed from teaching responsibilities at appointed times so that they could meet either face to face or via electronic media.

Similar problems exist for students who find themselves wanting to take two courses offered at precisely the same time. Offerings during weekends and summers have much to recommend them and states can play a central role in making these offerings more widespread. Again, while scheduling problems are common in small rural schools they are by no means unique to them. A categorical aid designed to encourage the offering of courses outside of regular school hours would benefit rural as well as other types of students.

In summary, I would assign the highest priorities on the small rural school finance research agenda to 1) making whatever progress is possible toward developing and utilizing educational technologies to reduce the importance of small size diseconomies in education; and 2) thinking through the grounds upon which to justify state or federal support for the remaining problems associated with operating a school in a rural area. I have listed five promising directions. These need to be refined and others developed.

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STAFF DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH AND RURAL SCHOOLS: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

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Prepared for the National Rural Education Research Forum
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October 16-17, 1987

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Overview

This review of research related staff development in rural schools is organized into five major sections. The first provides an overview of the research that has been conducted in the rural schools. This section is followed by an analysis of the general staff development research literature which provides findings which may have implications for educators in rural settings. The third section summarizes the practices from the first two sections that appear to be applicable to rural educators. Part four is a commentary on the existing research which points up a problem of conceptual ambiguity in the area of rural staff development. The final section is a proposed research agenda which offers substantive, methodological and conceptual suggestions for our research colleagues.

SECTION I: STAFF DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH FROM RURAL SETTINGS

While the existing literature on staff development specifically devoted to rural settings is sparse, spotty and scattered, it does exist and it is growing. Without question the field's reach still exceeds its grasp. As an example of the discrepancy between reach and grasp the recent Resource Review developed by the Clearing House on Teacher Education (AACTE, 1987) listed 197 citations on staff development and only four appear to have been conducted in rural settings!

Needs Assessment, the Case for Uniqueness

The theme of rural school uniqueness is played in various keys which include school and district size, lack of resources, difference in mobility patterns, difference in values, difference in teacher training requirements and difference in achievement and vocational pattern. Lundsgaard (1983) argued that three problems made staff development more difficult in rural settings: 1) Lack of full time personnel for staff development, 2) Logistical problems of scheduling, class preparations, etc. and, 3) Perceptual or attitudinal problems (eg. inservice appears costly in a small budget).

Reece (1984) grappled with what appeared to him to be a contradiction between needs and wants of the rural teachers, principals and school board members he surveyed. He argued that there were quite unique needs identified in his sample. For example, 45% of the elementary teachers reported teaching at 2 or more grade levels, 43% of secondary teachers were making 4 or more preparations and 9% were teaching in 3 or more separate disciplines. In spite of what appeared to be unique needs there did not appear to be unique requests for staff development; in fact, 50% of the teachers and principals in Reece's study indicated they did not believe special preparation for teaching in rural schools was necessary. Reece concluded: "There appears to be little indication from these perceptions that there is extensive need for inservice education in rural settings. (p. 9)

The requests for inservice help in Reece's study appeared to be in subject areas, special education, classroom management and curriculum; hardly a unique list of inservice needs! There appeared to be very little attention or expressed need for cultural characteristics of rural children or minority children or dealing with affective domains.

Nelson and Trueblood (1982) made the strongest plea for the uniqueness of rural contexts. They suggested that: "The demands on rural teachers are of a different qualitative and quantitative mode than their counterparts in graduate programs or in non-rural teaching settings." (p. 5)

Hoyt (1981) examined preservice and inservice options for rural educators and concluded: "Education students who will be teachers in rural areas need somewhat different training from other prospective teachers." (p. 3) She argued, without data, that students should be exposed to realities of rural schools which might reduce the rapid turnover of teachers. This argument is interesting in that one could argue alternatively that exposing students to the realities of rural schools might also reduce the likelihood of their willingness to teach in rural schools in the first place. Either argument runs counter to data from other sources which suggest that rural teachers typically have grown up in rural communities; either in the districts or very near the districts in which they are employed.

At times, writers were strongly committed to the notion of rural school uniqueness and yet attempted to build generalizations which belied that uniqueness. For example, O'Connell and Hagans (1985) wrote: "Summarizing, the Rural Education Advisory Committee noted that staff development in rural settings must be based upon the realization that rural schools are unique in their organization, in the types of students and communities they serve, in the demands they place on other professional staff, in the types of instructional materials they need and in the instructional delivery systems they use." (p. 7) The assumption that rural schools represent a class of schools about which generalizations can be made seems to belie the individual differences inherent in rural schools. The simple contradiction which emerges is that if rural schools are very different from one another then it is quite difficult to draw generalizations about rural schools as a collective whole.

Some attempts to tailor staff development programs to rural settings may result in statements which appear condescending if not discriminatory. Consider the following quotation: "Often suburban workshop leaders, familiar with teachers who operated at stages 2 or 3, found themselves at a loss to give meaningful examples and modeling to rural teachers who needed clear stage 1-oriented directions." (O'Connell and Hagans, 1985, p.9) This statement may have been motivated by a desire to provide a unique match between the training and the skills required; however, personal experience and research data do not make clear that rural teachers are uniquely functioning at Stage-1 in their cognitive development.

Staff Development Research in Rural Settings

The following studies represent the nucleus of what we hope will be a growing number of research investigations in the future. Only a limited number of studies were found which attempted to assess the effects of particular staff development programs in rural schools but there is some evidence that scholars are beginning to extend and test program effectiveness in rural schools.

Ostlund (1986) provided in-service training for 28 physical science teachers and reported positive changes in attitudes toward perceived competencies in teaching science and increased cognitive gains for students after four months but the study suffered a common pair of flaws: 1) Lack of a control group and, 2) lack of adequate description of the training program.

Kilgore et al. (1986) provided a useful case study as they tested the generalizability of empirically derived effective practices from the general staff development literature in a rural school setting. Five schools (two K-4 grade schools, one 5-6 grade school, one Junior High and one Senior High) were provided with training in the following 7 practices which the researchers had gleaned from the literature as having been empirically validated.

1. Use of short and long term planning needs.
2. Joint planning and participation of teachers and administrators in all staff development activities.
3. Maintain close relationships between in-service activities and curriculum development.

4. Focus staff development on specific teaching skills.

5. Develop continuous program planning throughout the school year.

6. Identify local teachers to demonstrate and provide coaching at sessions.

7. Use voluntary participation of faculty and staff.

The case study provided strong support for practices 1 & 2, weak support for practice 3 & 5. Practice 4 yielded ambiguous results and coaching (practice 6) was reported as having consistent but only moderately strong effects. Since all participants were voluntary it was not possible to gather data on this practice.

One study broke new ground and experimentally tested causal links among variables which had been found to be statistically correlated in the research literature. Marzano, et al. (1984) selected a set of established variables and manipulated them in a quasi-experimental design with a very small sample size of 5 experimental and 5 control classrooms. The strength of this study was that the researchers demonstrated that the desired behaviors had, in fact, been taught in their 20 days of in-service which were distributed over a one year time span.

The researchers concluded that achievement appeared to be negatively correlated with newly acquired teaching behaviors but it appeared to these reviewers that they may have been premature in drawing that inference. Out of 9 pre-post comparisons there were 3 favoring the control group which were statistically significant, 3 favoring the experimental group which were not statistically significant and 3 more which favored the control group but not statistically significantly. Such mixed data drawn from such a limited sample would appear to lead to a more cautious inference of no differences being found.

Additionally, researchers should be advised to examine their measures carefully for what would appear to be unusual occurrences. In this study the Kindergarten class scored at the 76th percentile on the pre-test and dropped to the 38th percentile on the post-test which should raise serious questions about the measure used or about variables other than the type of in-service training!

Other researchers studied personality characteristics of rural teachers and examined relationships with attitudes toward staff development. Trueblood and Flanagan (1984) claimed, without data, that the drive for internal locus of control seems strong in isolated rural school sites and therefore the change agent role is best played by an internal leadership team as opposed to external change agents. Flanagan's (1984) dissertation examined the relationship of locus of control and attitudes toward inservice education among rural teachers and found that secondary males were more internally oriented and also more negative toward inservice education in contrast to elementary teachers who tended to be female, externally oriented and more positively disposed toward inservice education. In her dissertation, Trueblood (1984) found that younger, less experienced rural educators have more positive attitudes toward inservice training.

Rural Staff Development Programs Described

While the number of research studies which actually tested the effects of programs was limited, there are other studies presented in this section which attempted to describe their practices or to list what appear to be promising alternatives. The value of such studies is obviously limited but they can serve as useful guides for the next step in the research process.

Hoyt (1981) is representative of those writers (eg. Davison, 1981; Baker & Ambrose, 1985) who described programs which were seen as desirable for staff development in rural settings. She listed the following programs as noteworthy: 1) Field-Based Professor, 2) Cadre-Training, 3) Self-Instructional Materials, 4) Television and Satellite Technology and, 5) Satellite Radio.

Nelson and Trueblood (1982) presented a field-based delivery system for rural teachers and made four points: 1) A strong need exists for more staff development attention in rural schools, 2) Their teachers demonstrated a negative self image on the Kettering Climate Survey, 3) The courses they developed helped teachers achieve growth in self-concept, improved staff communication, more satisfaction in teaching, better understanding of problems of other teachers at other grade levels, and 4) Rural teachers express frustration at the lack of attention they have received from their own school district or from the state department of education. They stated "... many rural teachers have felt the pattern of rural neglect and need to know that they will not be 'burned' again" (p. 8)

Bruce, Hubright, and Yarbrough (1976) described a co-operative plan of graduate in-service between Aloma, Georgia public schools and Georgia Southern University. They summarized their work as follows: "If successful change is to occur in rural education, the college must take a step toward student/community oriented staff development. It is a step the graduate school cannot take as long as it remains isolated from the influence of the community and student. (p. 453)

Needs Assessments of Rural Districts

The following studies provide us with only indirect information about staff development. These studies examined perceived problems of faculty, administrators, schools and districts and from these lists one might infer an agenda of staff development needs.

Barker and Muse (1983) compared the needs of K-12 rural schools with fewer than 300 students and K-12 districts with 300-900 students. Smaller schools expressed greater problems with: 1) Adequate school finances, 2) Need to improve curriculum, 3) Securing math and science teachers, and, 4) Motivation/goal setting were more important than problems with drugs, vandalism, sex, alcoholism or cheating.

As a parenthetical aside, the authors noted a tendency for researchers to take every opportunity to put in a "plug" for rural schools as evidenced in the following example. While unrelated to the data from their study, Barker and Muse could not resist the temptation to urge the reader: "Without question, one of America's greatest resources is her rural schools and those professionals who are teaching and training our rural youth." (Barker and Muse, 1983, p. 7)

Horn (1983) studied the expressed needs of 162 Kansas teachers who were recent college graduates. He examined 45 topics of college studies and found that respondents differed in degree of emphasis rather than in requiring a completely different set of qualifications for successful teaching in rural schools. Horn does not advocate a unique program of preparation for rural teachers but does argue for sufficient flexibility to assure a higher degree of success for beginning teachers.

Helge (1985) as the result of his research, provided a list of distinctive needs of rural teachers and argued that teachers needed help to:

1. Obtain specialized teaching resources
2. Use "high-tech" innovations
3. Integrate rural-focused content into their curricula
4. Obtain additional funding and equipment
5. Involve the community
6. Relate effectively with rural parents
7. Incorporate instructional arrangements for special needs populations

One of the more balanced needs assessments of rural teachers was undertaken in British Columbia as Bandy (1980) assessed 225 rural teachers and 40 principals regarding their perceptions of required skills and characteristics of effective teaching in small schools. Principals agreed that advantages of rural schools were to know students well, belong to a rural community, and have opportunities to individualize instruction. Teachers listed close cooperation, community involvement and agreed that communities expected to be involved with the schools. Both principals and teachers agreed that isolation and lack of privacy were disadvantages of life in the rural setting. Bandy sought both advantages and disadvantages of teaching in rural schools and this contrast pointed up one of the conceptual difficulties of attempts to pin-point differences in rural and non-rural settings. One of the distinct advantages offered by subjects in the study for teaching in a small school was the advantage of country living. One of the distinct disadvantages offered was the problem of living in a rural community. Equally unhelpful was the finding that an intimate knowledge of parents was seen as both an advantage and disadvantage.

From the limited length of this section, it is clear that the research literature on staff development in rural settings provides one with very little assistance about how to design professional growth programs for rural school personnnel. However, the research on staff development in non-rural schools is much more extensive and may provide researchers and practitioners with more helpful hints about appropriate practice in rural school districts.

SECTION II: RESEARCH FINDINGS FROM NON-RURAL SETTINGS

Since the research on staff development in rural schools is so limited, rural educators must look elsewhere for answers to questions about effective staff development practices. While the research on staff development in rural schools is meager at best, there is a considerable body of research literature in this area for public schools in general. Much of this research has been conducted in non-rural settings and has been completed since 1970.

This section discusses the effective staff development practices that have been identified in extensive reviews of research and research studies conducted in settings which are not exclusively or predominantly rural. The section begins with a review of studies conducted in the 1970's on teacher attitudes and perceptions about inservice education. These findings are followed by a discussion of effective staff development practices identified through national studies conducted in the late 1970's and the early 1980's. One study examines effective practices and includes a large sub-sample of smaller and rural schools which provides some basis for judging the degree to which the national studies of effective practices match up with effective practice for rural schools.

Once the effective practice research is presented, the remainder of this section will present research findings that (1) provide insights into recent trends related to staff development; (2) address the impact of staff development; and (3) raise questions about the practices that have been identified as effective.

In reviewing the results of this research from non-rural settings the readers are cautioned that practices and programs that may be effective in large districts with larger schools and located in urban and suburban settings may not be appropriate for rural districts and small schools. However, given the dearth of research-based information about effective staff development in rural settings, these studies do provide the rural educator with some insights into what might work in their schools. These findings may also help researchers identify specific questions and topics for future study in the area of staff development for rural school personnel. Finally, these studies provide a basis for the design and implementation of staff development programs until a more extensive research base is developed to guide practice for rural schools.

Attitudes and Perceptions about Inservice Education

In the early and middle 1970's there was a growing concern about the effectiveness of inservice education among educational researchers. As the result of this interest in staff development, a number of studies were conducted to determine the attitudes of educators toward and about their inservice programs (Brimm and Tollett, 1974; Ainsworth, 1976; Zagarmi, Betz and Jensen, 1977; Joyce and Peck, 1977). These studies suggested that teachers, administrators and college personnel were not satisfied with their current inservice programs. The most common defects reported were poor planning and organization, activities that were impersonal and unrelated to the day-to-day problems of teachers, lack of teacher involvement in planning and implementing the programs, inadequate needs assessment; and unclear objectives. The lack of follow-up in the classroom or in the job setting after training was a universal problem reported in these studies.

While educators were negative about current practices, nearly all teachers and administrators indicated that inservice education was crucial to improved school programs and practice. Brimm and Tollett (1974) found from their survey that teachers believed that they should select their own inservice activities to strengthen their professional competence; that teachers needed to have options in the "what, how, when, and where" of their inservice; and that teacher inservice should focus on improving classroom performance. These researchers also found that teachers supported the use of such staff development practices as needs assessment, specific objectives for inservice activities, follow-up help after inservice training, and provisions for inservice during the school day. Ainsworth (1976) found that teachers want inservice that was practical, systematically planned, and provided for a variety of activities including teachers sharing with each other.

In 1977, Zagarmi and her colleagues found that teachers preferred staff development programs which:

- had a quality of newness;

- built on teacher interest;
- provided choices;
- lasted for a longer period of time;
- provided a chance for teachers to share;
- gave participants some control of their experiences;
- provided for follow-up help after training.

The results of over one thousand interviews conducted in forty-four states by Joyce and Peck (1977), provided data which support the findings from these other studies. In addition, these researchers discovered that the teachers, college of education faculty, higher education administrators, teacher organization representatives and other educators they interviewed believed that:

- teachers and school administration should plan inservice together;
- inservice participants should determine what and how much they will be involved in inservice;
- teachers should be required to participate in inservice.

Effective Staff Development Practice

During the late 1970's and early 1980's researchers moved away from assessing the attitudes toward staff development to the identification of specific practices that would increase the effectiveness of professional development programs for teachers and administrators. The realization that staff development was a key to change (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978) and the increased interest in effective school research (Brookover, et al, 1979; Edmunds, 1979; Perky and Smith, 1982) coupled with teachers' perceptions that inservice education was not very effective, resulted in a series of descriptive survey studies to identify effective staff development practice. During these same years several researchers conducted extensive reviews of the research on staff development programs. This section summarizes the results of these efforts to identify effective practices.

Lawrence's (1974) review of the research on inservice education was the first major effort to identify the "characteristics" of successful staff development programs. This major and most quoted review of the research on staff development examined ninety-seven previous studies and reports of staff development to identify commonalities in successful programs. Lawrence reported the following nine generalizations about effective practice:

- Inservice programs conducted in school settings are more capable of influencing changes in behavior and attitude than are programs in other settings.
- School-based programs in which teachers participate as helpers to each other and as planners of inservice activities tend to have greater success in accomplishing their objectives than programs which are conducted by college or other outside personnel without the assistance of teachers.
- School-based inservice programs that emphasize self-instruction by teachers have a strong record of effectiveness.
- Inservice education programs that have differentiated training experiences for different teachers, i.e. are individualized, are more likely to accomplish their objectives than are programs that have common activities for all participants.
- Inservice education programs that place the teacher in active roles are more likely to accomplish their objectives

than are programs that place the teacher in a receptive role.

- Inservice education programs that emphasize demonstrations, supervised trials, and feedback are more likely to accomplish goals than are programs in which the teacher is expected to store up ideas and behavior prescriptions for a future time.
- Inservice education programs in which teachers share and provide mutual assistance to each other are more likely to accomplish their objectives than are programs in which each teacher does separate work.
- Teachers are more likely to benefit from inservice education activities that are linked to a general effort of the school than they are from single workshop programs that are not part of a general staff development plan.
- Teachers are more likely to benefit from inservice programs in which they can choose goals and activities for themselves as contrasted with programs in which the goals and activities are preplanned.

This review has come under some criticism due to methodological flaws in the studies analyzed (Cruickshank, Lorrish, and Thompson, 1979). Cruickshank and his colleagues pointed out the flaws but went on to indicate that even though there were problems, this was the one major attempt to summarize the research literature on inservice education. They viewed the generalization developed by Lawrence as reasonable hunches and hypotheses that still needed systematic examination. As the reader will see, these characteristics continued to be identified in the research reported after 1974.

For example, three studies completed between 1975 and 1980 provided support for Lawrence's nine practices. These studies included the Rand Study of practices and factors which affect educational change in schools conducted by Berman and McLaughlin

(1975, 1978), an extensive examination of staff development practices in three states and schools in selected urban and rural districts to identify effective practices completed by Yarger, Howey, and Joyce (1980), and a national survey to identify effective staff development practices conducted by the National Inservice Network (Kells, 1980). These three studies also indicated that having the principal participate in staff development with teachers was very important. Since each of these studies provided practices in addition to those noted by Lawrence that were important in effective staff development programs, they are summarized in more detail below.

While comprehensive studies of effective staff development were rare in the middle seventies, Berman and McLaughlin's (1975, 1978) report of the findings of a Rand Corporation study (Rand Study) of practices and factors affecting educational change in schools with federally funded programs disclosed some important practices that are related to the design and delivery of effective staff development. These practices included:

- teachers and administrators working together to adopt the practices or programs to be implemented in their school;
- the strategies for implementing the changes chosen by local teachers and administrators;
- inservice training that is concrete, teacher specified, and ongoing over a period of time;
- time provided for teachers to meet so they can share, solve problems, and make modifications in what they are doing;
- teachers having access to advice and guidance from peers who were implementing similar programs;

- teachers having on-call assistance from inservice project or district staff;
- principals participating in inservice with their faculty;
- a positive, supportive school climate for improvement developed in the school by the principal;
- teachers developing a sense of efficacy.

The first comprehensive examination of staff development was conducted by Yarger, Howey and Joyce (1980). These researchers surveyed the principals, teachers and university faculty in Michigan, Georgia, and California and the schools served by the Urban/Rural School Development Program to identify perceptions and recommendations about inservice teacher education. Information was requested on a variety of topics including effective staff development practice. Their study revealed that the respondents supported the use of teachers as inservice instructors, teachers selecting the goals and plans for inservice education, teachers serving as peer observers/coaches after training, teachers receiving pay as incentive for participation in inservice programs, and principals participating in inservice with teachers.

These three researchers indicated that principals, teachers and university professors agreed that inservice decisions should be made by a collaborative governance body of teachers and administrators. These respondents also believed that the costs of inservice for general personal growth and moving up the career ladder should be covered by the participants. On the other hand, the school districts should cover the cost of job-related inservice and all inservice required of teachers and administrators.

In a similar study, the Quality Practices Task Group of the National Inservice Network (Kells, 1980) conducted a national survey to assess the perceived importance given by six different role groups to forty-six staff development practices. The sample consisted of staff development experts, state department of education personnel, federally funded teacher center directors, directors of federally funded local educational agency inservice projects, and NEA and AFT personnel involved in inservice. The items in the survey instrument were classified into six categories; the first dealt with practices related to institutionalizing an inservice system; the other five addressed essential characteristics of good staff development. The effective practices which were identified through this study included:

- Inservice providers are selected on the basis of qualifications for specific tasks;
- Inservice content and strategies are directly derived from the assessed needs of students, personnel and organizations concerned;
- The inservice design recognizes the vital importance of the participants perception of need for the training proposed;
- The inservice program design is long-range and provides for ongoing support and evaluation;
- Procedures exist to assure and to provide access to adequate numbers of personnel, adequate fiscal material, and facility resources;
- The inservice design includes plan for facilitating the implementation of quality practices throughout the system;

- Decisions concerning the inservice education program are based upon the evaluations of program participants and others who are affected by the program;

- The goals of individual participants for inservice should be defined and acknowledged in the overall program goal to the maximum extent possible;

- Inservice participants should have access to follow through consultation which is separate from the personal evaluation process of the system;

- The inservice program design defines outcome expectations including knowledge, skill, and effective goals;

- Inservice activities are individualized insofar as possible to each participant's assessed needs and desires;

- Inservice activities emphasize peer teacher learning;

- The documentation of the impact of inservice activities should include the perceptions of students themselves whenever appropriate.

Dillon-Peterson and Greenawald (1980) in a fourth study, focused on determining appropriate inservice for social studies teachers. These researchers conducted a series of interviews with twenty-four national staff development experts. Their results disclosed some additional factors that contributed to effective staff development. In the judgment of the experts interviewed, the following were important when ensuring effective staff development programs:

- a positive climate characterized by effective communication, organizational commitment, and community support.

- a systematic and continuous planning process based on assessment of long-term and short-term needs.

- the appropriate and permanent assignment of leadership responsibility.

- the adequate and consistent allocation of human and financial resources.

- formal and informal incentives for participation.
- effective and appropriate goals, content, and strategies.
- the provision for data collection, evaluation, revision, and follow-up.

Conceptualizing the Process of Staff Development

At the time that the results of these three studies were being published, Wood, Thompson and Russell (1981) were in the process of analyzing the research literature to develop a conceptual framework for staff development that would be based upon the available research and best practice. The five stage RPTIM model they extrapolated from the literature was presented in the 1981 Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Yearbook. The authors discussion of their five stages (Readiness, Planning, Training, Implementation, and Maintenance) of staff development identify specific guidelines and practices for the design of effective staff development programs. Their focus was on school-based staff development.

After validating 38 practices which defined the five stage model using a national panel of staff development experts, Thompson (1982) proceeded to analyze the available research and descriptions of successful staff development programs for additional evidence to support each practice. Wood (1987) replicated the process and both researchers found extensive support for the practices. These practices included all of the practices noted in the earlier studies reported here. A summary of the practices which define each stage is presented below with references to the literature which supports the practices.

Readiness Activities: In readiness, a school faculty, with assistance from staff developers and central office administrators:

- Examine the major problems of the district and their school and spend time becoming aware of the newest and most promising ideas, practices, and trends in education; i.e., they create a data base for what is needed and possible. (Wood, Freeland, and Szabo, 1985);
- Develop a positive school climate where the faculty know each other well, have clarified their educational values, use the skills and understandings required to support open communication, have the skills for group decision making and problem solving, see the strengths in diversity among their peers, and are supportive of colleagues who are making changes in their professional practice. (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978; Schienfield, 1979; Comer, 1980);
- Collaboratively develop--with the help of parents, community leaders, and central office representatives--a written set of 3-5 year goals of school improvement that are supported by the teachers and principal (Litwin and Stringer, 1968; Lawrence, 1974; Berman and McLaughlin, 1978);
- Examine practices and programs in and outside the school to determine which are congruent with the staff's improvement goals (Caldwell and Wood, 1981);
- Select practices and programs that faculty will implement to achieve their improvement goal over the next 3-5 years (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978).

Planning Activities: Once the goals and programs/practices are selected, the school faculty and administrators share responsibility for planning. In this stage, those responsible for staff development work with the principal and teachers to:

- Identify the specific practices that teachers, principals, parents, and students will need to demonstrate when the improvement goals and programs are implemented (Charters and Jones, 1974);
- Conduct a needs assessment by gathering information from the staff to determine the extent to which the desired practices

are present in their school (Rubin, 1978; Oja, 1980; Dillon - Peterson and Hammer, 1980; Charters and Jones, 1974);

- Determine the resources available to support staff development programs and personnel during the current budget year and over the next three to five years (Wood, Thompson, Russell, 1981);

- Develop detailed written plans for staff development which include:

    - the knowledge, skills and attitude objective required to achieve the 3 to 5 year school improvement goals,

    - the detailed first year inservice training activities to achieve the short range goals of the plan,

    - the general training activities for each of the remaining years of the plan, and

    - the strategy to obtain and maintain support and approval of the written plan, including a budget, from the school faculty, central office, and the board of education. (Sarason, 1971; Havelock and Havelock, 1973; Sergiovanni, 1979; Rubin, 1978; Dillon-Peterson and Greenawald, 1980).

Training Activities: The training stage is where staff development plans are implemented to help the faculty learn new skills and knowledge and develop the attitudes needed to achieve their improvement goals. It is here that workshops are conducted that respond very directly to what we know about adult learning. This is the stage that represents what we have typically referred to as inservice education.

When inservice activities are designed or selected, the research suggests that they should include the following characteristics:

- present both the theoretical and research rationale, in addition to the "nuts and bolts" of what is to be learned (Sparks, 1983);

- use small group or team learning wherever higher order thinking and a secure learning environment are desired, (Tough, 1967; I/D/E/A, 1971; Johnson and Johnson, 1980);
- provide some choices in the objectives and activities so that participants have some control over their own learning, (Roy, 1987; Massey, 1980, Dillon-Peterson and Hammer, 1980);
- involve participants in directed practice where they can try out new behaviors, techniques, and ideas, and obtain helpful feedback (Lawrence, 1974; Wood and Neil, 1976; Arends, Hersh, and Turner, 1980; Joyce & Showers, 1980).
- use peer teacher and administrators with appropriate expertise as inservice leaders, (Rubin, 1978);
- have the principal participate in inservice with the teachers; the superintendent with their principals (Berman and McLaughlin; 1978; Hall, Rutherford and Griffin, 1982);
- complete, share and critique "action plans" for using what is learned during inservice activities once the participant is back on the job. (Wood, McQuarrie, and Thompson, 1982).

Of course, there are other important characteristics of effective inservice "Training" activities. However, these seem to be among those most closely related to adult learning research and to what makes the difference in the more effective staff development programs.

Implementation Activities: This stage addresses a common complaint about current and past staff development programs. That is, what is learned in inservice does not find its way into the every day work activities of the participants. Here is where the teachers and principals make the transition from learning something in the controlled setting of inservice to adjusting and adapting what they have learned so that it becomes part of their daily work activities. During implementation, those faculty who have completed inservice are provided follow-up assistance through:

- Planned visits to the work site by the staff development trainer (Joyce and Showers, 1983);
- On-call or pre-planned peer observations and meetings to provide feedback, share experience and solve problems, (Little, 1981; Joyce and Showers, 1983; Goldsbury 1980; Buckley, 1975; Lawrence, 1974);
- Access to resources required to support implementing what they have learned, e.g., materials, released time to plan or to modify plans and personnel to provide on site coaching; (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978; Little, 1981); and
- Recognition, rewards, and assistance for those implementing their new learning from administrators, especially from one's immediate supervisor (Little, 1981;

Maintenance Activities: This stage is where the professional behaviors that are installed into daily classroom and school practice are monitored to ensure they continue to be used. Here is where the teachers and administrators in a school become involved in shared responsibility for maintaining the quality of practices and programs that have been learned in inservice and installed through coaching on the job. This joint responsibility includes such activities as:

- Systematic programs of supervision by school and district administrations (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978);
- systematic use of colleague consultation (peer supervision) where teachers and administrators provide feedback to their peers (Goldsbury, 1980); and
- collection of feedback from student and parents related to practice used or not used (Wood, Thompson, and Russell, 1981).

Following the initial verification of these practices through the review of research on staff development and other related areas such as change process, adult learning, and organizational development, a national survey was conducted to determine the degree to which practitioners and university professors with expertise in the area of staff development would support the use of these research-based practices (Wood, McQuarrie, and Thompson, 1982). The responses from over eighty percent of the membership of the Council of Professors of Instructional Supervision (COPIS) and the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) indicated strong support for all of these 38 practices. Both groups reported that nine of the practices were essential when planning and implementing staff development. Those viewed as essential included developing a positive school climate; having long range improvement goals; having faculty adopt and support the school's goals; involving faculty in selection of school improvement programs; conducting needs assessment; sharing leadership with teachers for planning inservice; having principals participate in inservice with their teachers; selecting inservice trainers based upon expertise; providing for follow-up coaching; and having the principal recognize and support those who implemented changes.

This same study also assessed the degree to which the practitioners and professors perceived these 38 practices were implemented (McQuarrie, Wood, and Thompson, 1984). The findings revealed that all but three of these practices were neglected. The most neglected stages included Readiness, Implementation, and Maintenance. The practices which were most under-implemented included developing a positive school climate; collaborating in the development of school improvement goals; setting long range improvement goals; examining current practices in the school; conducting needs assessment; providing for followup assistance after training; having the principal recognize those implementing changes; ensuring adequate resources are available for implementation; using self-monitoring and student feedback to ensure maintenance, and sharing responsibility for maintenance. As the reader can see, there was considerable overlap between the essential and most neglected practices.

From these data, the researchers concluded that the 38 practices and the Readiness, Planning, Training, Implementation and Maintenance stages provide educators with a framework for designing effective staff development. This study also identified ten research-based assumptions that both groups of staff development experts believed ought to guide educators thinking about staff development. Over ninety percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that:

- All school personnel need inservice throughout their career;
- Significant improvement in educational practice takes considerable time and long-term inservice programs (three to five years);
- Inservice education should focus on improving the quality of school programs;
- Educators are motivated to learn new things when they have some control over their learning and are free from threat;
- Educators vary widely in their competencies and readiness to learn;

- Professional growth requires commitment to new performance norms;
- School climate influences the success of professional development;
- The school is the most appropriate unit or target of change in education; and
- The principal is the key element for adoption and continued use of new practices and programs in a school.

A companion study to the Wood, McQuarrie and Thompson survey was conducted in Pennsylvania to determine practitioners perceptions of the RPTIM practices and stages. In the spring of 1981, Thompson (1982) surveyed a sample of teachers, principals and central office staff development specialists in eighty districts selected through a stratified random sampling procedure. He used the "Survey of Effective School Practices" which was also employed to collect data in the national study described above. Based on a seventy-seven percent rate of return, there was remarkable agreement in the degree to which these three groups of practitioners supported the practices, stages and assumptions and the responses of the national group of staff development experts. The essential practices identified by teachers, principals and staff development specialists were almost identical to those reported by the COPIS and NSDC expert groups. Similar results were also found for the most neglected practices and stages.

Thompson did uncover a very interesting finding in his study that was not part of the national data. He discovered that central office staff developers and principals perceived significantly higher implementation of the practices than did teachers. In an effort to discover why this was the case, this researcher interviewed the responding teachers, principals and staff developers in a representative sample of the eighty districts. The results of these interviews disclosed that teachers were more accurate in their ratings of the degree to which the practices were actually employed. Based on his finding, he suggested that the further one was from receiving the inservice, the more likely one was to overestimate or idealize the use of effective practices.

Thompson's findings are of particular interest to rural educators because sixty of the eighty districts in his sample had fewer than 4000 students; one-half of the districts had fewer than 2600 students. Pennsylvania, according to the Pennsylvania State Department of Education, has the largest rural population in the United States. Given the rural nature of this state, the fact that the two largest urban districts in Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, were not included in the sample of schools, and the large number of small schools in the sample, one can at least begin to make some reasoned inferences about the appropriateness of the results of this study for rural schools.

In the year following the completion of the Thompson dissertation, Sparks (1983) reviewed the research on staff development related to effective teaching. She described staff development as a nested process which includes the context, process and content. In her examination of the studies related to the process of staff development, she found support for many of the practices that Thompson had identified.

In the same November, 1983 issue of Educational Leadership that Sparks' review appeared, Cox (1983), Crandall (1983) and Loucks (1983) reported the roles of teachers, principals, outside assistants and central office staff personnel in successful implementation of change. These roles were identified as the result of a Study of Dissemination Efforts Supporting School Improvement conducted by the National Diffusion Network (NDN). This three-year study examined schools that had been successful in implementing new curriculum or innovative practice with federal funds. The results of this NDN research supported many of the staff development practices identified in the Readiness, Planning, Training, Implementation and Maintenance stages. This was true even though the NDN focus was on district-wide decisions about the changes and staff development, while Wood, McQuarrie, and Thompson were examining a school-based approach to improvement and staff development.

The Content of Staff Development

During this same time period (1979-1982), the content of staff development received some attention. For example, in 1980 Yarger, Howey and Joyce found that teachers and teacher educators believed that such topics as meeting the needs of mainstreamed children including the gifted, moral education, multi-cultural education, career education, environmental education and education of the economically disadvantaged were important inservice content. Their data also disclosed that contemporary curricular issues and innovative new teaching strategies were not part of the inservice content for teachers.

This last finding is interesting given that three years later Sparks (1983) reported that instructional improvement was an important goal of schools in the United States and that the appropriate content for increasing the impact of teaching on student learning had been identified. Some of the content areas she identified for staff development related to instruction included classroom management, instructional techniques, teacher expectations and team learning (Brophy, 1983; Rosenshine, 1983; Slavin, 1980).

While the content of staff development programs is the guts of what we expect participants to learn, the reviewers found no systemic examination of this topic in the research literature. From the limited data we did uncover, it would appear that the primary interest of researchers has been on identifying effective staff development practices (the process), not the content of staff development.

Emerging Trends in Staff Development

Over the past ten years, particularly during the last five years, researchers have begun to conduct studies that examine specific programs and practices that have been advocated by leaders in the field of staff development and school improvement. The areas that seem to have received the greatest attention are (1) the identification of the psychological concerns and how those affect staff development; (2) the use of follow-up coaching to promote transfer from inservice training into practice in the work setting; (3) the use of peer instructors to conduct inservice education; (4) the entry support of first year teachers; and (5) the emphasis on school-based staff development.

The psychological nature of the participants in staff development has received increased attention in the research related to staff development. The Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) developed through the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education at the University of Texas at Austin, identified seven sequential stages of concern that potential users of innovations may have. These research-based stages included awareness, informational, personal, management, consequence, collaboration, refocusing (Hall, 1979).

According to the CBAM researchers, successful professional growth programs need to be congruent with the concerns of the participants. Simply stated, if the teachers are concerned about how to improve their use of a particular reinforcement strategy, the inservice growth experience ought to focus on this "management" concern, and not on the impact of the program on student achievement, a "consequence" concern (Hord, Rutherford, Hurling-Austin, Hall, 1987). This matching of concerns and staff development suggests that professional development programs must include a wide range of inservice activities, e.g., group sessions to inform and clarify the characteristics of the program (informational); discussions which address the personal concerns expressed by individuals and small groups about the amount of work required by a change in practice (personal); skill-building workshops (management), and sharing and evaluation sessions which examine the impact of the new practices on student (consequences). This suggests a diagnostic, individualized approach to staff development.

McKibben and Joyce (1980) looked at the psychological states of twenty-one teachers and their participation in inservice education programs. They used Maslow's needs categories to identify the psychological stages of teachers. From lowest to highest level of needs, these stages included: (1) basic physical, (2) psychological safety, (3) love and belonging, (4) achievement, and (5) self-actualization. Their findings showed that:

- Teachers at the self-actualization level were more involved in staff development and more at ease with sophisticated kinds of training. These teachers also saw professional growth as a responsibility of each teacher;
- Teachers at the third stage were involved in training concepts that enabled them to do better what they were already doing; and
- Teachers at the basic physical and psychological safety needs level participated only in inservice that was required.

While these studies provide interesting and helpful information, the extent of the research in this area is still limited. Educators are just beginning to examine the issues related to the psychological state of the adult learner; we have done very little with assessing how this kind of data, when applied in practice, impacts on the effects of inservice programs.

Coaching or follow-up assistance after inservice training is another practice that has been given considerable attention in the literature much to the credit of research by Bruce Joyce. For over two decades educators have bemoaned the lack of transfer from the inservice programs into daily practice. Joyce and Showers (1980, 1981) have noted that the study of theory, observation of demonstration, and practice with feedback will enable teachers to use practices/skills fluently and appropriately. They go on to say, however, that without follow-up coaching in the classroom, after inservice training, transfer and integration of what has been learned will not occur.

These researchers indicate that inservice instructors, peers, and supervisors can provide the coaching and technical feedback needed back on the job. The observing of a series of 20 to 30 trials in the classroom and providing feedback helps the teacher determine appropriate use of their new learned behaviors to achieve the desired consequences (Joyce and Showers, 1983; Showers, 1985).

Coaching also facilitates the teacher's ability to adapt new skills to their students. Finally, coaching provides psychological support during the time when teachers are refining their new learning. It reduces isolation and increases support (Joyce and Showers, 1982).

While the advocates have promised great results if coaching is used as part of a staff development program, there is some data which raise questions about the impact of such practice. Two recent studies reported in this review conducted by Kilgore et. al. (1986) and Wade (1985) suggest that we still need to examine coaching and its impact on transfer of learning during and after the Training Stage.

Use of Peer Trainers is a third practice which has been given attention in recent literature. This is not a new concept to staff development (Rubin, 1969). Several of the studies conducted in the 1970's have indicated that teachers ought to be the trainers for their peers (Lawrence, 1974; Yarger, Howey, and Joyce, 1980). In a study conducted by Wu (1987), teachers interviewed indicated that they preferred other teachers as consultants; they believed that peer instructors created a comfortable atmosphere that facilitated exchange of ideas; usually placed participants in a more active role; and were more practical in focusing what participants learned on immediate application in the classroom. However, it is interesting to note that Wu's review of research on the impact of peer-taught inservice provides little evidence to support the use of teachers as trainers. The problem is the lack of studies that address the effect of peer teaching in staff development.

One recent study was identified that examined the skills of seventeen successful professional assisters (former teachers) in the New York City Schools (Saxl, Lieberman, and Miles, 1987).

These peer staff developers were primarily in delivering school-based inservice activities. Through extensive interviews with their project managers, school clients, and use of observation and ranking instruments, the researchers identified eighteen core skills of effective professional peer (staff development) providers. Those skills included Interpersonal Ease, Group Functioning, Training/Doing Workshops, Educational General (Master Teacher), Educational Content, Administrative/ Organizational, Initiative-Taking, Trust/Rapport Building, Support, Confrontation, Conflict Mediation, Collaboration, Confidence-Building, Diagnosing Individuals, Diagnosing Organizations, Managing/Controlling, Resource-Bringing, and Demonstration. This study did provide information about what peer staff developers need to know and be able to do. Unfortunately, it did not provide data which validate the effectiveness of peer instructors.

Finally, there are two trends in staff development that staff developers perceive are important while we lack studies which indicate those practices are effective. For example:

School-based Staff Development: The effective schools research has led practitioners to support school-based staff development. Yet, a review of the research reveals no comprehensive studies which indicate that school-based staff development is any more effective than district-wide staff development. In fact, there is conflicting evidence in this area when we examine the research reported by Berman and McLaughlin

(1978) and the National Diffusion Network (Louchs, 1983; Crandall, 1983; Cox, 1983). Lipsitz's (1984) research suggests that school focused staff development is important to effective secondary schools, but still his work does not indicate whether this approach provides better results than district-wide staff development.

Entry Year Assistance Programs: In recent years, several states have passed legislation which requires specific staff development programs for new teachers. Yet, McDonald, (1980), and Zeichner (1980) indicate that such programs have been ineffective. In 1983, Tishner also reported that such programs had been unable to demonstrate that they were better than the sink-or-swim approach provided most new teachers. The research related to the effects of the staff development programs for new teachers is still relatively limited. However, the state of Oklahoma has systematically encouraged such studies through annual research symposia where research on entry-year assistance programs are shared (University of Oklahoma, 1987).

Research on the Impact of Staff Development

Even though there has been a growing body of research on effective staff development practice during the 1980's, there is still little evidence of its effect on teachers' learning, behaviors, and perceptions (Louchs and Melle, 1982). There is also limited data on the impact of teacher staff development on student achievement, the real long-term target of our investment in staff development for school personnel. However, recently researchers have begun to address this question.

For example, Wade (1985) conducted a meta-analysis of ninety-one research documents on staff development. Her study indicated that the inservice teacher education programs reported in the literature are moderately effective. She also found that attempts to increase participants' learning was highly effective, while inservice to effect changes in teacher behavior and reactions to teaching were moderately effective. However, her meta analysis of studies to demonstrate results by looking at student changes pointed out that staff development was only mildly effective in this area. From Wade's research, one can conclude that inservice programs for teachers are effective at increasing teacher learning and to some extent in changing teacher behavior and attitudes/perceptions.

This meta analysis also described practices which did and did not impact on teacher learning and behaviors. For example, the ninety-one studies showed that:

- Inservice training that includes both elementary and secondary teachers is often more effective than inservice for either group separately;
- Inservice is most successful when participants are given special recognition for their involvement (eg. selected on a competition basis to represent a select group);
- Regardless of who conducts the inservice sessions, teachers are more likely to benefit when they learn on their own;
- Inservice programs that use observation, micro-teaching, audio and visual feedback, and practice are more effective; and

- o Inservice programs are more effective when the leader (trainer) assumes the role of givers of information and the participants are the receivers of information.

Recent Research Raises Question About Effective Practices

The Wade study (1985) also raised some questions about effective staff development practices identified in earlier studies. Her analysis indicates that inservice is not significantly more effective when conducted at a school site; when participation is voluntary; when any special combination or sequence of instructional methods are used; or when peer instructors are employed. Probably the most surprising finding was that coaching did not have the significant impact on transfer of learning that has been attributed to it.

Guskey (1980) has also raised questions about practices related to obtaining teacher commitment and positive responses to goals for staff development and improved practice. Several researchers (Wood, Thompson, and Russell, 1981) have indicated their participant commitment needs to come prior to inservice training and implementation. However, the research Guskey has reviewed indicates that positive attitude changes and commitment result from seeing a positive impact of new practices on students in the classroom after training is completed and teachers have implemented the new procedures (Bolster, 1983; Crandall, 1983; Guskey, 1979, 1982, 1984).

In this section we have reviewed the research conducted in non-rural settings which seems to have implications for those responsible for designing inservice programs in rural school districts. These studies, coupled with the review of the literature on rural staff development presented in the first section, provides researchers and practitioners with some insights into the kinds of professional development practices that may be effective in rural settings. The next section summarizes those practices.

SECTION III: SUMMARY OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR RURAL SCHOOLS

An analysis of the research reported in the first two sections suggests practices that should be considered when staff development is planned for rural school personnel. These practices are general descriptors of what one needs to include in the design of professional development programs. The specifics of how they are implemented are still not clearly defined by the existing research, especially the research conducted in rural schools. They do, however, provide general directions for rural staff developers and--as will be seen later--they can assist researchers identify areas of needed inquiry.

Stated briefly, those practices include:

1. Inservice training should focus on school-based improvements in professional practice;

2. The development of participant ownership through involving teachers in the selection of the goals and program changes that serve as the basis for staff development;

3. Teachers and administrators should work together to plan staff development programs;

4. Staff development planning and training should be based on a careful, systematic needs assessment;

5. Guide practice and experiential learning where participants in inservice education can try out new behaviors and techniques, exchange ideas, and obtain helpful feedback increase the chances of success in the Training Stage;
6. Use of peer instructors with expertise as an inservice leader promotes the achievement of inservice objectives;
7. Follow-up assistance as inservice participants begin to implement what they have learned during training once they have returned to their work setting seems to promote implementation and transfer of learning;
8. Participants should have some opportunity to control part of what or how they learn; and
9. Principals should participate in inservice programs with the teachers.

It is interesting to note that these practices hold a strong resemblance to those presented by Lawrence in 1974. It would also appear that the five stages of staff development described by Wood, Thompson, and Russell (1981) are an appropriate conceptual framework for rural schools. However, given the size of most rural districts, the question of whether the focus of staff development should be on the school or district-wide goals and programs for improvement is still unresolved. The remainder of the assumptions that undergird the RPTIM approach to designing professional development programs seem to fit all schools, including those in rural districts.

While the research and other literature reported earlier does identify some general practices and stages for rural staff developers, they also raise some questions about the appropriateness of certain staff development practices for rural settings. For example, to which extent are the following practices important in designing effective rural staff development programs?

- using peer trainers;
- providing follow-up coaching in the work setting;
- using a learning cycle of demonstration, modeling, practice, and feedback;
- conducting inservice learning activities in the schools;
- using experiential learning activities;
- linking inservice to school improvement goals; and
- developing a positive school climate.

Before proposing specific research needs for rural staff development that address these and other important questions, we need to pause for a second and reflect on a major issue related to rural schools. Earlier in this paper, the writers pointed out that the unique needs and nature of rural schools was not consistently supported in the literature. Thus, before discussing the research needs related to rural staff development, the conditions or contradictions about conditions in rural schools that affect how we must approach staff development in such schools will be examined.

SECTION IV: CONCEPTUAL CRITIQUE

The literature on rural staff development shares an emotional commitment to the preservation and enhancement of rural schools which strikes a responsive chord in the authors and probably in those who read these words. Unfortunately, the writing tends to be more prescriptive than empirical and more hortatory than analytical. The prescriptions and exhortations appear to be rather consistent and pervasive and will be examined as to the degree of their substantiation in the research literature. With an eye toward sharpening our focus in future research, several contradictions which appear in the literature will be shared as problems to be clarified in future investigations.

Contradictions

One example of conceptual ambiguity might be termed "You can't have it both ways." There were statements which described rural schools simultaneously as poor, deprived, disadvantaged and also as idyllic havens of bucolic serenity. For example, Meier (1982) stated: "Small towns are regaining some of their popularity as city dwellers migrate out of highly concentrated urban areas to find more satisfaction in rural styles." (p. 7) On the same page the following quote was found: "Rural areas have been deprived of their fair share of America's wealth and public services and have been excluded from the standard of living enjoyed in metropolitan areas of the United States."

Another contradiction which appears to ripple through the literature is the simultaneous concern that rural teachers do not understand the norms and values of rural students and the indication that rural teachers are predominantly drawn from the same areas in which they are now teaching.

As yet another example of contradictory expressions, consider the following two quotations: Fratoe (1978) concluded: "Rural students not only attend schools with fewer support staff and services, less revenue and less per pupil funding, but they are also more likely to enroll in school later, progress through school more slowly, complete fewer school years, and score lower on national tests than students attending metro area schools." This bleak portrayal contrasts sharply with the data reported by Barker and Muse (1983) which found schools with enrollments under 300 pupils recorded more National Merit Exam Finalists, a higher percentage of graduating seniors (1981-87) scoring 25+ on the ACT and a slightly higher percentage of graduating seniors attending college than did their counterparts in larger schools.

Additionally, the case for a "separate" set of needs for rural teachers rests on rather shaky conceptual and empirical grounds. Sher (1977) argued that teachers are needed who are "...specially trained to be generalists." Sher also asserted the best rural teachers are the ones who are able to cope with sparsity, utilize community resources, invent curricular materials, and, above all else, are oriented toward teaching children rather than subjects. The emphasis upon general training appears to conflict sharply with Gjelton's (1978) plea for a strong tradition in the teaching of basic skills and essential facts.

While diversity of opinion exists in all areas and could be argued to contribute to the richness of the research base, there are other possible reasons for the wide ranging views regarding staff development in rural schools. In spite of our best efforts to intellectually accept the notion of how unique and diverse rural schools are, there is still a tendency to assume that we all are talking about the same set of phenomena when, in fact, we are not. Rural schools vary so widely that any attempts to generalize run great risks. Sher (1978) provides us with a summary reminder of the amazing diversity which eludes our best efforts to reduce rural schools to a conceptually clean set of categories.

"Rural America may well represent the single most diverse and heterogeneous group of individuals and communities in our society. The island village off the coast of Maine, a coal-mining town in West Virginia, a ranching area in Wyoming, a college town in Minnesota, an impoverished community in the Mississippi Delta region, a ski-resort section of Vermont, a migrant-worker settlement in Texas, an Alaskan Native village near the Arctic circle, and a prosperous grain-farming area in Iowa have little in common except that they are all classified as rural areas of the United States." (p. 31)

In addition to the diversity which Sher identified, one need only glance at the reference to the prosperous grain-farming area in Iowa to realize how rapidly that diversity can become even more diverse. The implication for engaging in research in such a volatile and diverse field suggests that we must keep our generalizations simple and direct and that we must describe our samples rigorously and precisely to enable our readers to examine the contexts of our research fully. While this advice is sound for all researchers it appears doubly sound for those of us attempting to make sense of education in rural America.

SECTION V: RESEARCH NEEDS

Throughout this review we have alluded to the diverse and unique qualities of rural education settings and the implications which this diversity carries for staff development needs. It is clear that research in rural staff development encounters a series of difficulties to achieve a systematic and coordinated effort. First and foremost, the great challenge presented by the aforementioned diversity will continue to haunt us. Scattered forays by doctoral students to attempt small studies with insufficient sample sizes will not suffice to provide us with the data base needed to provide an underpinning for a comprehensive staff development program.

We will enumerate what we consider to be the major flaws in the existing research base and then provide a final section which offers a few ideas about research content, research methodology, and add a few thoughts about the development of a national research agenda.

Research Critique

1. The existing studies do not provide a detailed description of settings and populations studied. As we have argued, rural schools do differ markedly from one another and the

careful description is particularly necessary to help practitioners and fellow researchers to determine the extent to which the results of the study are appropriate for their districts, their schools and their faculty.

2. With few exceptions, the descriptions of treatments tended to be vague or non-existent. The lack of details regarding inservice practices and activities prevents us from identifying the specific practices that have an impact on effectiveness of inservice programs for rural school. Perhaps more importantly, the lack of careful description prevents replication of research findings which is the essential building block of cumulative research.
3. Limited sample size and single district or school workshop descriptions continue to be the norm rather than the exception in rural staff development research. If we are to be able to generalize about appropriate practice for rural schools or different kinds of rural schools, more comprehensive samples are required.
4. Few experimental studies have been undertaken and the few which exist lack tight controls; the implications here are obvious.
5. Studies tend to focus too quickly on changes in pupil behavior before having established that changes have been effected in the behavior of teachers in the classroom. There are parallels here with the early research on micro-teaching in which researchers attempted to jump from the lab

sessions with teachers to measure changes in pupil achievement before they had demonstrated that the teachers had acquired the desired behaviors.

6. Finally, a common methodological flaw which exists in most applied research was also noted in the staff development literature, particularly in those studies conducted in rural settings. Results are often cited without attention to issues of internal validity of the research. At times, conclusions are drawn which appear to demonstrate that certain practices have failed when a more careful appraisal would indicate that the treatment had only been partially implemented. Outcomes should be measured against the degree of success in establishing the practice.

Research Content

We would suggest that a large scale needs assessment for staff development in rural schools should be undertaken with an adequate sample base and with a standardized form which provides information in ways which can be more adequately used by universities and state departments of education. The continuation of small, inconsistent and scattered forays into the needs assessment area should be discouraged in favor of carefully stratified assessments done in each state. The results could be widely shared with colleges, universities and state departments to aid them in their staffing and planning. Standardizing the form in which the needs assessments are done would enable research to be conducted regarding regional, ethnic and social class differences which exist in the complex concept called The Rural School.

An additional area deserving attention is the careful description of the context in which needs assessment is being done. Given our myriad backgrounds it is essential to provide the planners with much more information than is customary about the settings in which the needs assessments are being undertaken. This same plea is offered in connection with all research done in small, rural settings in that generalizability of results will continue to be a problem in educational engineering and particularly in our diverse rural schools. We can increase the usability of our research if we carefully document the origins of our research findings.

A third area which appears important is an examination and comparison of delivery systems which are most useful to rural settings. Obviously, the technology which is now available needs to be exploited for rural staff development purposes but other systems and ideas need to be examined as well. Given the frequent cries of isolation which are heard argues for attempting ways to bring the teacher out of the rural setting as well as bringing skills, knowledge and information to the teacher.

A final suggestion about research content is a suggestion that effective practices should be tested individually for their applicability in rural settings. The few studies which have attempted test applicability have tried to do too much. Given the small sample sizes it is unreasonable to test 8 to 10 effective practices in a single study. We would all gain collectively if we applied our "small is beautiful" maxim to our own research and engaged in small, well crafted studies which attempted to do a few things well rather than try to make up for a century of lost time in one study.

In addition to the above general suggestions, we would offer more specific suggestions for studies which appear to be needed to enhance our understanding of rural staff development.

1. A survey of current practices employed in rural schools is needed which might replicate the studies done by Wood, McQuarrie and Thompson (1981) to determine the extent of use of the 38 RPTIM practices in rural schools.
2. Studies are needed to determine the effect of the nine practices which appear to be the most appropriate (See Section IV) for rural school staff development. Particularly, the effect of these practices should be examined as to their impact on:
    a. positive attitudes toward new programs, practices, and/or participating in inservice programs.
    b. commitment, ownership, and participation in staff development activities.
    c. change in participant behavior.
    d. changes in on-the-job practices.
3. Studies to determine whether school-based or district-wide staff development is more appropriate for rural schools--for

what kinds of inservice, for what kind of goals, and for what size rural districts.

4. Studies to determine the appropriateness of the concerns stages identified in the Concerns Based Adoption Model for rural teachers.
5. Studies defining the current status of staff development for first year entry teachers and administrators.

Methodology

There are two methodological suggestions which appear pertinent to the rural school staff development setting. First, we would urge an increase in well designed and in-depth qualitative studies which increase our understanding of how and why certain staff development practices function as they do. With a concern for rich detail and providing what Clifford Geertz (1973) calls "thick description" we may be able to better understand the complex and subtle aspects of our rural setting. For example, one of the often stated beliefs is that small rural schools provide a total experience for children which goes beyond viewing the child as a composite of academic and social skills. Because the small school is staffed by someone from the community who understands the family background of the child and who also knows the values and culture of the community, it is frequently argued that this teacher is better equipped to individually respond to that child as a total and complete person. Try fitting that problem statement into a 2X2X3 factorial design!

Secondly, we would suggest that more staff development researchers utilize single subject or N of 1 experimental designs to take advantage of a methodology which is more suitable for the rural setting. As Borg and Gall (1983) stated: "It has been suggested that exploration of new educational techniques should begin with single-subject designs. This strategy enables the researcher to make intensive observations over a reasonably long period of time, to 'play with' treatment variations, and to formulate hypotheses. Insights derived from single-subject data then can be tested for generalizability in a multisubject design." (p. 719)

A National Research Agenda

There appears to be a need to establish a National Research Agenda for Rural Education. The creation of a Research Panel could be the first step toward the development of a matrix of needed research topics. By designing a series of studies which could be executed at the national level, sufficient cooperation could be achieved to have research done of sufficient scope to be defensible. By mapping out the major research domains, a national register of critical research studies needed could be maintained and doctoral students seeking either topics or access to data sources could be aided in their research efforts. We can no longer afford to allow the research agenda to drift without a strong central organization providing structure and guidance.

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Abstract

The review of the research on staff development and its implications for rural schools, by Wood and Kleine was well done. Their review showed that there was little substantive research targeted for rural schools and that most of the implications for staff development had to be drawn from other populations. Their paper revealed several conceptual ambiguities regarding rural schools and included some excellent directions for future research agendas. The major issues selected for reaction from this paper were: 1) Critique of existing research; 2) There are wide variations in rural school staff development needs, and, therefore, a difficulty in making generalizations; 3) Lack of funding for rural schools; 4) Staff development via technology; and 5) A national research agenda for issues in rural education. It would appear that researchers and trainers need to follow their own advice of communicating and working together, since much of the current research and training seems to have been conducted in isolation. Also, appropriate technology is available for use in sharing information and building more extensive networks.

OVERVIEW

The review of the research on staff development and its implications for rural schools, by Wood and Kleine was well done. Their review showed that there was little substantive research targeted for rural schools and that most of the implications for staff development had to be drawn from other populations. Their paper revealed several conceptual ambiguities regarding rural schools and included some excellent directions for future research agendas.

ISSUE: CRITIQUE OF EXISTING RESEARCH

REACTION:

Wood and Kleine pointed out the problems of existing research, citing the lack of control groups and small sample size. However, most rural schools have small faculties and random selection, or matched pairs, for treatment is not always practical. There is also an ethical concern for a no treatment group. Since funds are normally limited for staff development, and the need for training remains high, it is difficult for a researcher to deliver training to only one half of the faculty. A clinical research model for diverse and scattered populations will always be difficult to carry out. There is, however, a need for well described and documented case studies on a school-by-school basis.

ISSUE: THERE ARE WIDE VARIATIONS IN RURAL SCHOOL STAFF DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AND THEREFORE, A DIFFICULTY IN MAKING GENERALIZATIONS

REACTION:

The wide variation in needs seems to be well documented; however, rural populations also are more consistent in make-up from an anthropological point of view. Rural populations have less problem with population turnover. The cultural make-up is more consistent and community norms and values are less diverse. Therefore, there may be more commonalties and fewer problems in addressing staff development needs.

ISSUE: LACK OF FUNDING FOR RURAL SCHOOLS

REACTION:

This issue seems to be a problem in all schools. However, the research showed that there is little or no correlation between per pupil expenditures, or teacher salaries, and student academic achievement and retention (dropouts). The problem with funding in rural areas may have its origin in traditional spending patterns, with a lack of long range planning and focus for investments in staff development. There may be a parallel to the saying "work smarter not harder."

Plan better and spend less. Long range planning based on documented needs holds the promise of identifying additional funding.

In-service training for staff development will always be necessary; however, as research identifies common needs, clear messages can be sent to teacher education programs at colleges and universities to better train future teachers for rural teaching positions.

ISSUE: STAFF DEVELOPMENT VIA TECHNOLOGY

REACTION:

The authors clearly articulate the need for research in the use of technology as vehicles for service delivery. Presently, most technology information is delivered by the equipment vendors without the benefit of existing research to match the technology with local needs. Equipment by itself has never solved problems in education. Vendors and researchers need to work together to devise appropriate systems that include training and on-going evaluation. Spending needs to stop, and investment needs to begin.

ISSUE: A NATIONAL RESEARCH AGENDA FOR ISSUES IN RURAL EDUCATION

REACTION:

Wood and Kleine have documented well designed guidelines for future research in rural education. This reactor offers the following thoughts for the researchers consideration.

In regard to staff development, there may indeed be unique needs for each rural geographic area, and perhaps each school. However, teachers and administrators will not be driven by a research design. Partnerships need to be established between all the parties involved. The usual traditional design of training the staff and then looking for the gains in student academic performance and motivation could be reversed. Administrators and teachers usually react negatively to theory, research design and general training.

Administrators and teachers are more likely to positively respond to discussions centered on meeting the immediate needs of the students that they must have and deal with every day. Perhaps tutor-staff development programs could have their origin with student needs. These real world student needs would then get the agenda for staff development. Goodlad's research shows that long-range school progress must be accomplished school-by-school. Therefore, mass district staff development is of little value unless the entire district population has need of the same training.

Researchers and trainers need to follow their own advice of communicating and working together. Much of the current research and training is conducted in isolation. Technology is available for use to share information and to build more extensive networks. We are, after all, partners. We all need each other.

Background of Author

Dr. William A. Clauss received his PhD from the University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida in 1970. His professional experiences include public school teaching and administration in both Ohio and Florida, university level teaching and administration at the University of West Florida, the University Arizona, the University of New Orleans and Western Carolina University. His administrative duties have included Directorships of Continuing Education and program administration. He is currently the Director of the Office for Rural Education at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, North Carolina, and has held this position since the inception of the program in 1985.

A REACTION TO

STAFF DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH AND RURAL SCHOOLS

by

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The critical appraisal of the state of research related to rural staff development appears to confirm the suspicions of National Rural Education Association members concerned with the professional development of teachers, that is, very little has been conducted. However, while the small number of studies reviewed by the authors sugests rural research has received little emphasis, active members of NREA must question the absence of documentation of rural school staff development programs reported informally through the network of NREA members, as well as through formal presentations at the NREA annual conference and in our association's publications. In addition, data-based studies of effective staff development practices in rural schools, presented at our conferences, appear to have been lost from the pool of research accessible through normal data sources such as ERIC. Thus the first question raised by this review is, does the process of reporting work done by rural staff development researchers and practitioners match the search process of those attempting to retrieve the information? A second question may be, are rural educators reporting their work at all? Does the NREA need to assume a more active role in encouraging the reporting process?

The authors suggest that the rural staff development research base is growing, but offer us no clear basis for their optimistic judgement. If in fact there is a momentum, perhaps the NREA could provide appropriate support rather than initiate new efforts. Of the eighteen studies specifically identified by the authors as having been conducted in rural settings, only one appears to be experimental research. In reviewing that study, however, the reader is not provided with any description of identified variables, desired teacher behaviors, type of inservice or treatments. The other studies are descriptive in nature, and offer only a broad spectrum of generalizations. That it took less than eleven pages to review the research describes the state of the art rather succinctly. There is much work to be done!

In addition to appraising the rural staff development literature, the authors reviewed the non-rural staff development literature and recommended specific practices for our consideration. This section summarizes what is primarily survey or descriptive research. Appropriately, the authors caution us as to the possible presence of urban bias in the literature of the field. This reactor would suggest another caution in interpreting the recommendations for suggested practices. Many of the effective practices and models cited in this section were derived from analyses of the literature and received confirmation from national panels of experts. It is highly unlikely that the original literature was written by classroom teachers. While a few of the studies cited included teachers in the review process, several based their support for identified practices on the opinions of experts in non-classroom teacher roles. One of the studies, however, included followup interviews to clarify apparent discrepancies in agreement among teachers, principals, and staff developers. This resulted in the conclusion that the teachers' perceptions of actual implemntation of staff development practices were more accurate (or less "idealized") than the perceptions of those further removed from the classroom. Thus we are cautioned in the unexamined acceptance of any particular practice or model as effective when its sole claim of effectiveness is based on non-teacher opinions. The section does, however, offer a basis for dialog and debate as rural educators move ahead in the arena of staff development.

One generalized reaction emerged from reviewing the first two sections of this paper which then was further compounded by the third section. Rural educators are taken to task for failure to define "rural" or for an emotional attachment to a concept of rural uniqueness. However, as we begin our reading of the section on effective practices for rural schools we have yet to determine the authors' operational definition of "effective". We are also encouraged to consider the RPTIM Model as an appropriate conceptual framework for rural staff development, yet we have been presented with no empirical evidence as to the extent of its effectiveness, or that in fact it has ever been experimentally tested in any setting. It would appear that the entire field of staff development is on the threshold of establishing an empirical research base.

In the final two sections of the critical appraisal we are provided with commentary on the conduct of research related to staff development in rural settings. Some of the statements in the research critique suggest that there may be more experimental research than the reader could detect from the presentation in the first section. Perhaps our first task then, as rural educators, is to clarify or publish research which has been completed. As we develop our research agenda for rural education, we need to develop operational definitions of rural schools and effective staff development. These definitons will provide parameters for our research. We are provided a unique opportunity as we convene this first national forum for research on staff development in rural schools, as it appears that we begin with a clean slate.

Kathleen R. Flanagan, D.Ed., is presently an Assistant Professor of Education at Ashland College in Ashland, Ohio, where she teaches courses related to instructional methodology, curriculum and supervision to preservice and inservice teachers who come from and teach in rural school settings. Prior to her work at Ashland College she served as a teacher, principal, and staff development specialist. She has served as a member of the National Rural Education Association's Research Committee for five years, and has conducted research related to rural teachers attitudes toward staff development. She is currently examining teachers' uses of instructional methodology.

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A SYNTHESIS OF COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON RURAL SCHOOLS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL RURAL EDUCATION FORUM
OCTOBER 16 - 17, 1987

By
Kay Harned

The purpose of this synthesis is to briefly discuss the contents of the papers presented on economic development and more importantly to record the reactions, comments and suggestions of the group who attended the Economic Development and Rural Schools sessions. The group, composed of two school board members, three state employees, a representative of the federal government, a representative of a multi-state region and two university faculty; brought together a variety of perspectives about issues facing rural schools. The author is also the co-president of her rural middle school PTA. This group brought a rich background and a wealth of experience to this discussion.

Daryl Hobbs prepared a paper entitled Learning to Find the "Niches" Rural Education and Vitalizing Rural Communities. This paper provided an overview of the economic and socio-demographic changes that have occurred in rural America in the last thirty years and proposed a framework for rural school participation in economic development. Problems with traditional manufacturing and natural resource related products are identified and a focus on service industries, and entrepreneurship skills for small business development are suggested. These small businesses should focus on meeting the needs of the local labor market. The trend toward "knowledge-based" industries is suggested as well as renewed emphasis on basic education and programs that develop the skills of flexibility and innovation. Education programs that focus on generalist skills necessary to operate a business are important since there are a higher proportion of locally owned and operated small businesses in rural settings.

There was one reaction paper prepared by Richard Tulikangas. The reactor found Hobbs' overview provided an important contribution to understanding recent economic development issues in rural America, and felt that more specific strategies need to be explored to identify these "niches" for rural economic development. The reviewer felt that there is more potential for natural resource products, while the Hobbs' paper sees less potential for this industry to contribute to economic development.

The group began by discussing the innumerable demands being placed on schools and the ability of schools to respond. The fast paced changes occurring in society are placing increasing demands on schools to deal with family issues such as: divorce;

single-parent families; student dropouts; special needs students; problems created by the displacement of workers in rural areas and subsequent loss of family income and prestige; teenage pregnancy; and dwindling resources to keep quality teachers and equipment. The group was reminded by the school board members that there is a limit to the ability of schools to attend to all of these issues.

The group also discussed the resistance of community leaders such as local politicians and school board members to the involvement of schools in economic development. In some cases school administrators are resistant since they are expected to deal with so many other policy failures. While at the same time severe crisis conditions in rural economies are making these groups more open to suggestions about the involvement of schools in the economic development of their districts.

More specifically, the group questioned the ability of schools to respond to the model proposed by Hobbs. It was suggested that the components of this model are self-contained and each school district can take the model as far as is appropriate for them. In other words, not all school districts have the same problems and resources to address those problems and the model allows for these kinds of differences.

The group then focused on the role of school boards in economic development and a need for training was identified. We were reminded that boards must want this training and that school board participation does not necessarily include the power brokers in the community. School issues are too controversial and business people, especially, fear the loss of business because of the hard choices they must make if they run for school board. Further, the school board members in the group stressed that often they are the last to be involved in community efforts. They also stressed that school boards cannot be expected to do these projects alone. Recognizing the above, the group felt that rural school involvement in such economic development strategies is timely because there is a change in attitudes about who is responsible for education.

An often repeated theme throughout the group's discussion was the need for linkages with the private sector in order to enhance school programs. Input from business people on the needs of the workplace as well as developing relationships with local business people for cooperative ventures are important. Entrepreneurship education can lead to stabilization of local business and the potential reversal of downward industry trends. The future Farmers of America Program - Building Our American Communities provides a model for schools to follow.

Finally, comments centered on concerns about the potential exploitation of students in school-run business. Careful planning for these businesses and close supervision and involvement of teachers, administrators and boards is required to insure that the needs of the students do not take second place to the needs of these businesses. The last comments reflect a concern that strong academic rigor in vocational education curriculum must be forthcoming in order to meet the needs of the students who learn best in those applied situations.

SUGGESTED AREAS FOR FURTHER ACTION OR RESEARCH

1) Case studies should be conducted of unsuccessful and successful school/community economic development ventures focusing on common and unique elements of such efforts.These studies would be helpful in identifying more specific economic development strategies for rural communities. They would bridge the gap between the broad conceptual framework presented by Hobbs and Tulikangas suggestion for more specific economic development tactics.

2) There was a call for studies that address aspiration levels of community people, especially the perceived apathy toward school issues. This suggestion reflected the concern that parents are sometimes not interested in school issues.

3) Studies that develop methods to assess community needs related to formulating economic development strategies are important in identifying "niches' for economic development.

4) There is a need for the development of an accounting framework for the schools contribution to economic development.

Economic development is such a nebulous term that schools need such a framework to promote their contribution to the economic development of the region.

5) Studies of communities with school board participation that have made an economic comeback would prove valuable. In addition to providing insight into the process these studies could serve as an incentive for school boards to participate in economic development.

6) Worst-case scenarios about communities that did nothing in the face of economic decline are needed for much the same reasons cited above.

7) Meta-analyses of studies that seek to enhance academic rigor in vocational education programs can identify common procedures that work and those that are not successful.

8) Studies that address flexible and innovative curriculum design in vocational education are called for.

9) As the age structure of rural communities changes studies are needed that explore the contributions of retired citizens to rural communities. These studies should answer these questions: Who are these people? What are their skills and values? Are their values in conflict with the younger populations in rural areas?

10) What is the impact of transfer payments as a major source of income in rural communities?

11) What are the state and federal policies that preclude blending of academic and vocational programs.

12) Rural schools provide an ideal setting for the blending of academic and vocational education. This group could monitor studies being done in rural areas and serve as an information source on the state of current research in this field.

Finally, it was suggested that the community is an appropriate area of study for rural school students. It provides an excellent laboratory for students to learn a variety of skills. It provides a greater sense of belonging, an understanding of the development of tradition and an historical perspective on community development. It was suggested that more faculty encourage their students to become involved in the study of their home communities. In line with this, another suggestion was that a national group be identified and encouraged to sponsor a Survey of the Nations Communities. Such a survey would be used to gather information on communities throughout the nation and be conducted by schools. Students would be used as interviewers and learn social, analytical, management and writing skills in the process. The survey would have 10 - 20 standard questions that could be compiled on a state, regional and national level. The students and teachers in each school or district could then add additional questions related to the unique characteristics of the local community, focusing on local institutions in the community, the folklore of the community, or the needs of a particular group within the community.

In summary, the group that discussed economic development and the schools brought together a variety of perspectives on the mission, capabilities, and limitations of rural schools. The concensus of the group is that the time is ripe for new and innovative approaches to education and economic development in rural communities.

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Directions and Possibilites for Rural Education Staff Development

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Staff development is the means by which both institutional goals and professional development may be successfully achieved. The presentation and paper by Dr.'s Fred Wood and Paul Kleine at the National Research Forum provided an effective catalyst for ten people who spent a major portion of a day debating, discussing, brainstorming, and conceptualizing the importance of staff development as it relates to rural education. What was immediately discovered was that just as it is difficult to "reduce rural schools to a conceptually clean set of categories" (Wood and Kleine, 1987), it was also difficult to arrive at a "clean set" of answers pertaining to staff development. The diversity of opinions and philosophies espoused by the ten participants was as variable as are the types of schools identified as rural. It is therefore important that a caution be issued that the conclusions/assumptions arrived at during that time by the participants is not meant to be viewed as the only possible answer.

This diversity of views can best be illustrated by the group's attempt at defining the term rural. After an hour's discussion, it was decided that it was much easier to "know" what a rural setting was than to define it. It was then decided that the key to recognizing rural schools was to accept and acknowledge the importance of diversity and that the ability to describe the setting for gereralizability purposes was more important the the acceptance of certain words or phrases.

The participants then began the attempt to define staff development. It was rapidly agreed upon that staff development was best viewed as a subset of professional development as well as school improvement. It must improve what goes on within the district or institutional setting. Components of staff development were identified as readiness, planning, training, implementing, and maintenance Realistically, it was recognized that inservice is often mistaken for staff development when actually this only relates to the training component. There was an additional awareness that for staff development to be successful, teachers must recognize the need for it and be committed to it.

The group also fully acknowledged that in the "real world" staff development is frequently associated with student behavior and/or student achievement. This will often doom any long term staff development to failure because results on standardized tests are not immediate or miraculous. Certianly student gains may happen but the goal of effective staff development should be envisioned as a way to improve instruction and the educational process as well as the means for providing professional growth to the parties involved. Staff development can be highly successful if it is remembered that the process takes time. Time must be provided to study and select certain validated practices as well as be provided for implementation purposes. Then, and only then, should student behavior and/or achievement be evaluated.

A final notion regarding effective staff development focused on the idea that all things can be accomplished but that it would be much wiser for a school or district to select two or three items of particular interest and focus on those. It was accepted that schools within the same district might even select to work on different important building goals. Pragmatically speaking, it would be wise to attempt to make a match between what a school was going to do and what it was held accountable for.

In light of the fact that there is a dearth of good research on effective rural staff development, the group attempted to identify several aspects of methodology that would provide stronger, broader, research base in the future. It was felt that rural research needs to reflect and exhibit the thicker, richer description (Geertzz, 1973) of attitudes encountered, the demographics and social structures of the institutions, as well as the culture and values of the schcool/community/society that is being studied. If effect, the research should describe what happens in greater, better detail as as well as in greater depth. The group also felt that any and all supporting data should be supplied for the eventual use by others. This would provide the opportunity for others to replicate studies which supports the possibility for validation of results. Finally, once the research is finished, it must be shared with others. Several possibilities for dissemination of both research and results were suggested. The key is that the material must be readily available to researchers and schools if it is to be effectively utilized.

Once it was decided that the manner by which research had been conducted must become more focused, the discussion turned to areas and possibilites for future research. The result was quite remarkable with a multitude of possibilities being discussed. Two items must be noted. First, the value of this research should be the recognition of any effective methods for staff development that improves instruction as well as provides for professional growth. Secondly it was felt that repetitive attitudinal studies probably should be avoided since they serve limited purpose.

The research possibilities reflect immediate needs as well as future areas that will need to be explored. The order in which items are listed should not be construed as a ranking but only as a reflection of the order in which they were originally discussed. The areas identified for potential research were:

1) To investigate peer teaching and peer coaching possibilities and uses in rural schools.

2) To determine the applicability of the 38 RPTIM practices and/or the CBAM model to rural educational settings.

3) To design, implement, and evaluate staff development programs which focus on content areas.

4) To explore possible uses for technology in rural schools.

5) To ascertain differences between district wide and school based staff development programs and the applicability of both to rural schools.

6) To delve into collaborative leadership models (?)

7) To investigate models of staff development for entry level administrators and teachers and their applicability to specific rural needs.

8) To ascertain if there are any unique decision making/problem solving/assessment models that can be utilized by smaller faculties because it recognizes the uniqueness that may exist in these rather permanent groups.

9) To provide critical thinking, training, and skills for rural educators so that they may better prepare students for future needs and demands.

10) To research teacher leadership in rural schools and how it develops as well as its short term and long term impact on school effectiveness.

11) To research, develop and implement programs which train rural teachers to become staff developers.

12) To investigate gender leadership/participative differences in rural schools and design appropriate training possibilities for those with various career

aspirations.

13) To explore the possibilities of interactive video demonstrations and other satellite technologies.

14) To research educational consortiums/intermediate units and their impact on the education process.

15) To investigate methods which teachers and schools can be better prepared to recognize and meet economic demands in the future.

As was previously stated, a better job must be done in disseminating research and information pertaining to rural schools. The group identified several possible ways by which this could be accomplished. Ideas and possibilities are:

1) To publish the results of NREA conferences and future Research Forums.

2) To publish papers written by synthesizers at the National Rural Education Research Forum.

3) To publish significant research in monograph form.

4) To contact journals and editors advising them of significant research in rural education as well as identifying their thematic issues on rural education.

5) To recognize and establish areas of research for future doctoral study and contact doctorate granting institutions as to possibilities for significant research.

6) The NREA should explore possible linkages with regional labs who are actively studying or involved in rural education.

7) To take every opportunity possible to discuss rural education, its needs, and its value in truly understanding American education.

Finally, this active group recognized that quality research is greatly needed and that higher education is a very appropriate vehicle by which rural educators could be provided with information that would be both relevant and useful. The group also felt that all research conducted must be sensitive to rural needs and values. It must be conducted in an appropriate manner with results offered in the correct context. Only then will staff development research be able to meet the needs of small and rural schools.

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SYNTHESIS PAPER:

School Effectiveness from the Administration and Teacher Points of View

By:
Sterne Roufa
David Hagstrom
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SYNTHESIS PAPER:

School Effectiveness from the Administration and Teacher Points of View

INTRODUCTION

The following report will be subdivided into two main areas. First will come the questions and concerns of which the Track conversations essentially consisted. Subsequent to that will come a proposed Action Agenda. In essence, the questions and concerns will be reformulated into statements oriented to Policy or to Research or to Practice.

QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

1. Not surprisingly, members of the School Effectiveness Track (and many from other tracks) would like to know how a "Good Rural School" is defined. Is it somehow different from "Good School" except that its geographic locus happens to be within a rural environment? Along the same lines, do we (of the research community) have clear and appropriate ideas about teacher perceptions of the school effectiveness issue? Has sufficient clarity been developed between the various constituency groups such that it will permit further positive movement towards a heretofore elusive goal?

2. Why, when the issue of rural education is broached, does the conversation seem to apply only to small, poor, homogeneous (generally white) districts. Why do we seem to forget or ignore, at least insofar as conversation is concerned, that there are districts which are rural but of

differing sizes (to a point) and differing degrees of wealth and differing degrees of racial and ethnic composition. There may also be other characteristics not thought of.

3. Are rural schools providing equal educational opportunity? For the synthesizer's own curiosity, a request for the definition of equal educational opportunity might be included. That would lead into another question, "Who are the schools for"? What is meant by that is the observation that what is considered to be 'good' education (perhaps equal educational opportunity) in fact means preparing each and every to be reasonably competent and successful. This writer doesn't know if that is an 'Urban' bias but he does have a sense that not every community has thoses wishes for its children; 'good education' could very well translate into essentially forcing the children to leave home. Therefore the question. Put slightly different, and perhaps more into the political arena, are the schools for the individual or for the state or for some mixture?

4. What additional research is need to optimize teacher satisfaction in rural schools? Have the processes of investigating teacher motivation been exhausted or are there constraints outside the educational arena which force satisficing rather than satisfying?

5. There is concern that problems of rural education are (seemingly) addressed through the application of previously developed paradigms and templates, often used in urban settings. Other technologies may or may not be appropriate. Along with that concern is the concern that many

problems are (again seemingly) addressed by the application of conventional thinking; perhaps unconventional methods might be more applicable.

6. Should "Effective Schools Research" be done in rural areas?

ACTION AGENDA - Policy

1. Unless clearly identified as applicable only to specific types of schools, policy makers should insure that educational policy should reflect urban-rural, large-small, geographic differences.

2. All concerned parties, or representatives of those parties, should be taken into account. Of particular concern is the promotion of increased participation by community members and groups. Effective education cannot be effective without inclusion of community. Shared mission is essential; cooperation and community involvement should be of highest priority.

Research

1. Further "Effective Schools" research is called for across the spectrum of (urban-rural, large-small) districts. Of paramount concern is the development of a taxonomy of "good schools"; the broadest possible range of characteristics is necessary.

2. Sets of single defining characteristics should be considered as unacceptable. Those projects which are decided by single or few characteristics should be strongly discouraged.

3. Whenever educational research is carried out, the researcher(s) should be cognizant of the wide variety of schools and school districts. There is no single type of rural school or urban school; there are differing degrees of size and differing degrees of wealth and differing degrees of racial and ethnic composition. Homogeneity is a rare.

4. Theoreticians and researchers should arrive at a broadly acceptable definition of "equal educational opportunity". Further, empirical and philosophical research should be undertaken across a wide variety of venues to address the question "Who are the schools for?"

5. Continued research, perhaps using unconventional thinking, should be undertaken to examine the factors undergirding satisfaction of teachers in rural schools; further, complementary research should be undertaken into the implementation of means to improve the satisfaction of teachers in rural schools.

6. Research should be encouraged in the areas of community involvement and labor negotiations. Proposed questions are: "How can community involvement, representing the broad spectrum of members and concerns, be increased to the benefit of the community and the local educational system?" and "How can labor negotiations be conducted less adversarily and of greater benefit to all parties?"

7. Shared mission is essential; cooperation and community involvement should be of highest priority.

Practice

1. Negotiations and community or board discussions should be constrained to provide for the needs of the widely divergent interests extant in modern schools. In other words, politics of education should not be about gaining power tending toward devisiveness but rather should be about conciliation.

2. Practitioners of education must be cognizant of the variety of students coming into their schools and the variety of needs of those students. They must willingly seek, and take part in, the discussions about the direction and purpose of education.

3. Shared mission is essential; cooperation and community involvement should be of highest priority.

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NATIONAL RURAL EDUCATION RESEARCH FORUM

Rural School's Finance Track
Synthesizer's Report
Rose Ann Fogarty

October 16-17, 1987
Lake Placid, New York

Although we are working in an era of educational reform in which schools have high visibility, the needs of rural schools are often overlooked, as research and financial aid focus on urban problems. The members of the finance track of the Rural Education Research Forum present the following concerns and recommendations with the intent of focusing attention on those often ignored rural needs. This is a broad-based group, representing the interests of parents, teachers, administrators, schools of education, state education departments, and school boards, and the issues raised here are the shared concerns of the entire group. They are:

1. That the current balance of measures used to finance education often penalizes rural taxpayers;
2. That changes in rural life, including the loss of revenue sources and the growth of poor and minority populations, exacerbate this problem;
3. That state aid fails to adequately address wealth inequities, and the federal budget deficit may make it difficult to obtain increases in federal aid; and
4. That inflexible application of state and federal aid formulas and regulations often ignore rural realities.

Further, group members noted that at the local level:

1. Diseconomies of scale impose burdens on rural districts, yet local pride and identity resist consolidation;
2. Geographic isolation adds to the problems of staffing, staff development, and instructional resources;
3. Application and reporting requirements often actually prevent rural districts from applying for aid;
4. Inexperience and up-front costs prevent investment in technological systems that would offer long term benefits; and
5. Reform mandates impose disproportionate burdens on rural districts.

In spite of these handicaps, rural districts, when compared with urban and suburban districts and when resources and student background are factored in, show a surprisingly good performance. Many of the prerequisites for educational effectiveness are available in rural schools. Not all small schools are good, but effective schools do tend to be small. Thus the small schools of the typical rural district may offer useful laboratories and models for school effectiveness research. Particularly in establishing cooperative arrangements and in applying educational technologies to individual student needs, the rural school, with its resource limitations, is a natural setting for research and development.

The foregoing points dictate the need for an agenda of research and action on rural school finance to document inequities, identify strengths and opportunities, and anticipate the financial impacts of ongoing change.

We suggest the following research priorities:

1. Identify key areas for data collection. These might include:

   - changing demographics of rural areas;
   - district fiscal ability in income and by classes of real property;
   - school program offering;
   - pupil needs;
   - costs for providing needed programs; and
   - financial impact of reform mandates.

2. Develop improved data bases using standard measures. Encourage and support new and existing federal, state and interstate data collection efforts. Call for analysis by State Education Departments of the equity and effectiveness of state aid formulas.

3. Seek improved and expanded state and federal aid to experiment with alternative learning settings that integrate pilot programs for human and technical resources to meet individual student needs;

   - develop software to provide the enriched curriculum needed by rural schools;

- explore cooperative arrangements among districts to consolidate resources;

- improve communication and coordination with parents and community agencies;

- study school organization to determine appropriate levels for decision making; and

- address other rural school priorities.

We suggest the following action priorities:

1. Bring rural education needs onto the national agenda during the current presidential campaign and the upcoming state campaigns. Ideas and programs, not candidates, should be endorsed.

2. Work at the state and national level to enact legislation

   - improving sparsity aid;

   - increasing regulatory flexibility;

   - eliminating density bias; and

   - encouraging support for expanded use of technology, including regional communications networks and information banks.

3. Form appropriate coalitions to seek enactment of

legislation that encourages:

- greater equity of aid formulas in measuring district ability and pupil needs;

- increased use of personal income in measuring district use of more current and more standardized data in aid calculations;

- targeting of aid to problems common in rural districts, such as:

  - programs for at risk youth,
  - teacher and administrator training of school-based economic development.

The discussion of the rural school finance group ranged over a very broad area, from teacher recruitment and dropout prevention to the effects of geographic isolation and the potential of instructional technology. This breadth only servers to emphasize the basic premise with which the discussion concluded: that finance affects every aspect of rural education. For rural schools, that's the bottom line, and in terms of the bottom line, rural schools often come up short.

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Research: The Critical Audience Factor

A Reaction to the National
Rural Education Research Forum

by

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OVERVIEW

The 1987 National Rural Education Research Forum has developed processes for conducting and organizing the much-needed research in rural education. The focus of the conference was on specifying and developing research based studies to be implemented. From the researcher's position this provided direction and feedback that was most useful.

From a rural school superintendent's perspective, an additional component is required. The gap between research and implementation must be bridged. The essential question is, who is the research conducted for?

REACTION

The small district superintendent generally operates within a framework that must be recognized by others in the educational community if they are in fact seeking to assist with the development and change in rural districts. First, the small district superintendent has a wide range of job functions which require decisions based on relatively accessible information. The time factor and diversity do not allow for extensive research. The information sources are primarily memorandums from the state department, intermediate districts and some journal sources. Seldom are research based journals a regular source of information.

A second parallel factor is that often small district superintendents become "generalists". It is their responsibility to insure all components of the districts operations interwork effectively. Thus, one seldom has the time or the resources to devote to a program which is very specific in nature.

Third, is the reality of limited resources. Small school districts typically have limited budgets for conferences, meetings, etc., let alone access to other materials in the field. There are also limited staff resources, specialists who are involved and up-to-date in thier specialty are not a component in the small district.

The members of the research forum proposed that it is necessary to break the urban mold for research in rural settings to be effective. I offer here that it is also necessary to break the mold as it applies to the nature of the audience that the research is written for. The conditions outlined do exist, and if rural research is to be effective and have an effect on those districts it is designed to serve then a revised dissemination system is needed as well as a format that will be utilized by the practicioners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I appeal to the members of the research forum to not only continue to conduct the much-needed research, but to follow-up by developing or utilizing an existing network to get their findings to those who can best utilize it. In order to accomplish this a new perspective on dissemination of research is needed. I suggest the following:

1. Researchers must not only develop proper research based on standardized methodology and reporting, but must also develop briefs based on the research. The briefs must be written in a format that will appeal to the small district administrator.
2. The information from significant research must be provided to local district superintendents, they must not have to seek it out from the research journal which may be inaccessible.
3. Each university staff person should seek out contacts with local district superintendents and encourage their developing an information dissemination system.
4. The Regional Education Laboratories should serve as disseminators of information. They must take on an active, not passive role.
5. University staff and local administrators involved in rural education should work to develop programs at the university level that center on rural education where none currently exist.

CONCLUSION

If we can assume what Peters & Waterman (In Search of Excellence) identified in the private sector will apply to education to a degree, then continued researched-based study is most appropriate. It may well be that the significant developments in educational change in the waning years of the twentieth century will come from small and rural school districts. But, the effect of this can only be realized if proper dissemination parallels the significant developments.